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"The best you can write will be the best you are," was the hypothesis and the conclusion. Based on this belief, teachers assume a second-place position and the greatest emphasis is placed on the student and his own personal encounter with experience and with himself. The teacher's principle interest and responsibility becomes to assist the student in this crucial, discovery stage of writing.

The objective was to isolate the structuring principle of this "pre-writing" activity, and then to devise exercises to allow students to imitate that principle in their own writing. This study did not seek to offer a complete course in writing. The kind of writing that the project students produced was that which immediately follows the discovery of fresh insight. The evidence of test scores shows that, although there was no direct teaching of the writing process from pre-writing to re-writing, the students had enough training already and enough motivation to follow up their pre-writing discoveries with proper words in the proper places often enough to emerge as superior in contest with the "control" group where rules and tactics provided the basis for all teaching.

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PRE-WRITING

THE CONSTRUCTION AND APPLICATION OF MODELS FOR CONCEPT FORMATION IN WRITING

Cooperative Research Project No. 2174

D. Gordon Rohman

Albert O. Wlecke

Michigan State University

East Lansing, Michigan

1964

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PREFACE

The Department of English at Michigan State and its chairman, C. David Mead, take an unusually lively interest in the effectiveness of their writing program for several reasons. In the first place, they are concerned theoretically with the knotty problem of why students don't write very well, and with its twin problem, why writing courses don't succeed more often. In the second place, over eighty per cent of the majors in the department are candidates for teaching certificates, and these young people will be expected, in a few years, to teach writing to young people around the state. How can we increase the effectiveness of their training so that they in turn can become better teachers of our future students?

With the establishment of the Project English program, the department appointed a committee, headed by Dr. Elizabeth Rusk, to investigate ways that our department might secure funds to support research in writing, research that would not only (hopefully) shed some light on the major theoretical problems that confront the profession today concerning writing, but would also improve the quality of teaching in the department, especially for those who would soon become teachers of writing themselves in the secondary and elementary schools. Two projects were designed and approved out of that committee of which this is one.

The principal investigator of this project brought to the theoretical questions of writing an experience both in teaching writing for a decade in universities, and in writing for a living in journalism and free-lance books. The project made it possible to bring this direct experience of the problems of writing to bear upon the testimony of other writers, philosophers and psychologists, concerned with the theory of writing. The research assistant for the project was experienced in teaching writing both in high school and college, as well as a student of literary criticism and philosophy, fields which relate so directly to the important questions that researchers in writing must ask--and hopefully answer.

Both of us wish to thank Dr. Mead whose initiative and foresight encouraged us to pursue research in English with the help of the U.S. Office of Education Cooperative Research Program, and also Dr. Rusk who intelligently and sympathetically helped us to frame our proposal for research in the area of concept formation. In addition, we would like to thank Dr. David R. Krathwohl of the College of Education who spent many hours assisting the project directors in refining their proposal and preparing its budget.

From several parts of the university, others came to lend their assistance. For acting as readers, we would like to thank Dr. Russell Nye, Dr. Clinton S. Burhans, Dr. Clyde E. Henson, and Dr. Herman Struck

of the Department of English; Dr. T. B. Strandness, Dr. Robert L. Wright, Dr. Bernard F. Engel, and Dr. Don M. Hausdorff of the Department of American Thought and Language, and Mrs. Marguerite Jackson, Mrs. Doris Palmer, Mr. William D. Potter, and Mr. Cornelius E. Lampen, of the Lansing Public Schools.

Finally we would like to acknowledge the generous assistance of the following consultants: Dr. Donald M. Johnson, Department of Psychology, and Dr. Willard G. Warrington of the Office of Evaluation Services.

D. Gordon Rohman

Albert O. Wlecke

CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM

The General Problem

Why do students write poorly? Why do so many writing classes end up with indifferent results? These certainly are the important questions facing any research in English composition. The fact of failure we can take for granted; the reasons for it we cannot.

On the surface, students fail because their writing reveals that they apparently don't know enough about language and logic. Incorrect or ineffective language on the page before us is the most obvious symptom of failure. But why should there be so much incorrectness and ineffectiveness? Two answers are often proposed: students have not been taught enough about language and rhetoric; or, students have not been taught effectively enough. To the first answer, we must reply that they have been taught about language and rhetoric in one way or another throughout most of their schooling. It doesn't seem reasonable to suppose that mere quantity of instruction is at fault. Quality, it would seem, is the problem: they have not been taught effectively. But what does "effectively" mean? A common answer is that "effectively" means "rigorously" and the two most common approaches to rigor in language training involve assigning frequent writing and then correcting it intensively. These two approaches are based on two assumptions which are almost dogmas with many teachers: if you want to learn to write, write! If you want to teach writing, correct! Yet many teachers have tried both approaches, and have concluded that they hold no special magic that solves the problem of improving students' writing. A recent Project English study set out to test these two hypotheses and concluded that neither could be demonstrated:

a. There is no assurance that intensive evaluation is any more effective than moderate evaluation in improving the quality of written composition.

b. It must not be assumed that frequent practice is in itself a means of improving writing.

c. There is no evidence that any one combination of frequency of writing and intensity of evaluation is more effective than another.[1]

It is not so much that these researchers have once and for all discredited frequent writing and hard marking, as it is that these two assumptions, once thought to be axiomatic, are at the very least now problematic.

If not more rigor, then perhaps what we need is more insight into (a) the motivation for writing, and (b) the techniques that will make that desire to write more possible in the classroom. As to the first problem, motivation, why does not more of a student's language teaching "stick"? What makes teaching of language (perhaps of anything) "count"? How can we transform our concepts for goodness ("Make this essay more unified") into possible behavior for students?

Some new light is thrown upon the question of motivation in learning by Jerome Bruner in his essay "The Art of Discovery." Bruner finds it useful to distinguish between two kinds of teaching:

> that which takes place in the expository mode and that in the hypothetical mode. In the former, the decisions concerning the mode and pace and style of exposition are principally determined by the teacher as expositor; the student is the listener. The speaker has a quite different set of decisions to make: he has

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[1] Dwight L. Burton and Lois V. Arnold, Effects of Frequency of Writing and Intensity of Teacher Evaluation Upon High School Students' Performance in Written Composition, U.S. Office of Education Cooperative Research Project No. 1523, Tallahassee, Florida, 1963.

> a wide choice of alternatives; he is anticipating paragraph content while the listener is still intent on the words; he is manipulating the content of the material by various transformations while the listener is quite unaware of these internal options. But in the hypothetical mode the teacher and the student are in a more cooperative position with respect to what in linguistics would be called "speaker's decisions." The student is not a bench-bound listener, but is taking part in the formulation and at times may play the principal role in it. He will be aware of alternatives and may even have an "as if" attitude toward these, and he may evaluate information as it comes. One cannot describe the process in either mode with great precision of detail, but I think it is largely the hypothetical mode which characterizes the teaching that encourages discovery.[2]

It is just possible that much writing instruction fails because it is conceived within what Bruner calls the "expository mode," and the student-writer, as a result, never is given the chance to participate in the essentials of the process which he is being called upon to master. His involvement in his own writing and in the writing class is phony. He is not essentially engaged as a human being in what he is doing because the only motivation he is made aware of is extrinsic: he must write correctly and effectively because the teacher and society commands him to. In addition, he is more often told about the language than given the opportunity to work within it. Would writing instruction and student writing improve if we could conceive both within the terms of what Bruner calls the "hypothetical mode" which leads to discovery? Or in other words, is it possible to get real involvement of students with their writing and teachers with their students' writing, and if so, would this sort of involvement make possible the writing of better essays? These two questions provided the general basis for our research in this project. By putting into the hands of the student the means to participate in the very process and experience of the activity called "writing," we hoped to make his involvement real and his writing as a result better.

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[2] On Knowing, Essays for the Left Hand (Cambridge, 1962), p. 83.

The Specific Problem

We began our particular project with the assumption that the earliest necessary step for teachers to teach and students to understand in order to secure this "real involvement" with writing was the creative forming of classes or concepts in the mind of the writer. So our original proposal was for research in the construction and application of models for concept formation. We assumed that a person becomes a writer at the moment when the merely "autistic" fantasies, day-dreams and reveries of normal mental activity become mobilized to some specific purpose, in this case, the writing of a "subject." And we assumed that this transformation of what John Dewey called "sequential" thinking into "consequential" thinking is but a more intense and formalized manifestation of the basic and elementary form of all human cognition: rendering discriminably different things equivalent, grouping objects and events and people around us into classes.[3] We hoped that by a study of this process of categorization by which all people arrive at concepts (e.g. "small essays"), we could throw light upon the problem of writing essays (e.g. "larger concepts"), and also get at some of the reasons why people form one or another concept. Were the two processes parallel?

The more we thought about the relation between the two kinds of activity, and the more we observed the performance of our students in the first term that we offered our experimental course, the more we became convinced that (a) the two processes were parallel, but (b) for the writer the question was not so much what we had called (from Bruner) "concept formation" as it was "concept transference" (our own term). That is, we came to realize that a major task of the writer is to discover (L. invenio, to discover) within himself a pattern with which to organize his subject--the act of analogy in its widest sense as the illumination of any present circumstance by comparison with an assumed similar event in the past through a process of inference. Hence the term "concept formation" in our original proposal is misleading for our purposes since it seems to argue that creation is possible from nothing (*ex nihilo*). We concluded that the writer at almost any level from kindergarten on already has formed concepts in abundance (the most elementary and general form of human cognition). From a mind already well-furnished with concepts, the writer must select that one which will permit him to describe a new situation by inferring that it is like an old one. He *transfers* the old category to the new situation by abstracting certain features or patterns that both seem to hold in common: e.g., "Life is like a dream." "Dream" is an old "pattern" which helps us to conceptualize the problematic outlines of the large abstraction "life." We "cross-sort" categories, "inter-classify" them.

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[3] Jerome Bruner, Jacqueline J. Goodnow, George A. Austin, A Study of Thinking (New York: Science Editions, 1962), pp. 1-2.

So our models or paradigms were re-designed with this revised sense of "concept transference" in mind. We sought to direct students to participate in the analogical transference of pattern from one set of events to another, hoping thereby to introduce them to the dynamics of the creative process that lie at the heart of all writing.

But our continued thinking about the problem and observation of our students' behavior led us to another conclusion: that "concept transference" is not at the heart of good writing; that prior to the act of formation or transference certain steps had to be taken to insure that the concept eventually formed was effective for writing purposes. Too frequently, in the first term of our experimental course, we discovered that student writers formed their concepts for events (their "essays in embryo") before the events in themselves were sufficiently experienced. Consequently, although the students quite easily mastered the mechanics of transference (confirming our assumptions that this was a real part of the writer's activity), the concepts they ended up with were too often without meaning. They were mindlessly and mechanically pasting labels on events with the result that their hasty conceptualization of their subject obscured rather than illuminated the nature of the events for which the concepts were supposed to provide insight. The concepts that the students used were not truly their concepts; that is, they did not answer to the students' sense of what was real in their experience of themselves or their subjects. Rather than providing a solution to the problem of "phony involvement" we were actually making it easier for students to produce that sort of "automatic language" which is the curse of our culture. They quickly converted our exercises for concept-transference into games to "solve" assignments rather than using them as roads to real discovery of themselves and their subjects. We confirmed our assumption that concept-transference is a real part of the early stages of the thinking-writing process; but we also became convinced that something more basic was necessary if we were to get real involvement in the process.

We concluded that precisely because the forming of concepts was the most elementary and general form of human cognition, it was also subject to the most elementary and general forms of human weakness: most of the concepts that people hold they have inherited rather than formed for themselves. Consequently to write with them was simply to echo the culture. There is a school of thought which maintains that such writing is the primary and basic goal of composition teaching; that "writing" is primarily a "tool" course, a means to other ends, and consequently its highest virtue is "correctness" (i.e., good manners). People who hold this view pay a great deal of attention to what in literary criticism would be called the "texture" of language, but little if any to in-forming structure. We approached writing with the "liberal" assumption that the basic reason we taught students to write was to allow them greater self-actualization through better thinking, "to live more abundantly." And if we were merely permitting our students to echo the categories of their culture, they would never discover themselves within the writing process.

We had to move farther back in that process, prior to words on the page, prior to concept-transference, into the basic experience of students as persons. We hoped that if we could in some way use this "payoff matrix", we would be able to secure real involvement in the subsequent process of concept-transference. In the personal sense of what is real, we hoped to lead a student to desire real involvement with its conceptual expression in his writing.

Effective concept-formation, then, includes three things:

1. Attention to the particularity of events.
2. Attention to the personal sense of what is real.
3. Transference of an already known structure of events to the events of the subject.

CHAPTER II

HYPOTHESES

Part I: The Principle of Pre-Writing

As our statement of the problem indicates, we concluded that in order to approach the important question of effective conceptualization, we must fundamentally reconsider the entirety of the writing act, not just that part which appears "above water" on the page. Within the tradition of classical rhetoric, there are coherent, logic-oriented accounts of this earliest stage of the writer's activity. We believed a potentially more inclusive vocabulary could be put together from the accounts of writers and psychologists who have discussed the creative process. One of the major problems we soon encountered, however, was to give conceptual and methodological coherence to scattered and random accounts of creative activity, written in a variety of idioms and with a variety of intentions. To give at least a provisional and minimum definition to our work with conceptualization, we "translated" this great variety of terms into one vocabulary based upon a root organic metaphor. As well as giving us some theoretic and pedagogical coherence in what we attempted to do, this vocabulary seemed more appropriate to describe our own intuitive sense of what goes on in the process of conceptualization. In any event, the process of what we have called "translation" of our problem into a relatively fresh idiom gave us an opportunity to discover possibilities for questions and answers that simply are not potential within the established idiom of classical rhetoric. In a similar way, the English philosopher Weldon, as quoted by Bruner, approaches problem-solving. Weldon distinguishes among difficulties, puzzles, and problems:

> We solve a problem or make a discovery when we impose a puzzle form on a difficulty to convert it into a problem that can be solved in such a way that it gets us where we want to be. That is to say, we recast the difficulty into a form that we know how to work with--then we work it. Much of what we speak of as discovery consists of knowing how to impose a workable kind of form on various kinds of difficulties.[4]

A difficulty, Weldon goes on, is a trouble with minimum definition; a puzzle, on the other hand, is a game in which there is a set of givens and a set of procedural constraints, all precisely stated.[5] We assumed that in the present state of our knowledge "writing" is a "difficulty," a trouble with minimum effective definition, especially in those stages of conceptualization that we were studying in this project. We assumed, in addition, that the objective of research should be to push a "difficulty" as far as possible toward the maximum definition provided by a "puzzle." We imposed the organic vocabulary on the process of conceptualization hoping thus to convert it into a problem that could be "solved" in such a way that it got us where we wanted to be. We do not presume, however, to have converted the "difficulty" of the early stages of writing into a "puzzle" that now has all the intellectual and psychological security of "givens" and "procedural constraints." A good deal more testing of our hypotheses is necessary than was possible within the time allotted for this research. We can say that our organic "puzzle form" helped us more coherently to conceive of what we were doing, and it would seem, on the basis of our testing, to have helped our students to write better essays within the terms of goodness that an organic vocabulary establishes.

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[4] On Knowing, pp. 93-94.

[5] Ibid., p. 97.

"Writing" is one of those ambiguous terms that more often confuse than enlighten discourse. We can never simply define this special form of human behavior because it means so many things to so many men. There is no one philosophy of writing; consequently there can be no one method to teach it. There is no one form of writing appropriate to all occasions conceivable for writing; so there can be no one method that will equip a student in detail for each subsequent writing occasion. The most that can be done, it seems to us, is frankly to state your philosophy of writing, and within those frontiers establish whatever methodological and pedagogical laws seem appropriate. Whether done consciously or not, every approach to writing and to teaching writing does this. We have tried to be more conscious of what we were assuming, and more careful to state that our methods followed from our assumptions. If readers are in basic philosphical disagreement with us, then they will discover that fact when they read the list of our basic assumptions below, and they will discount much in the descriptions of our methods which exemplify and teach our philosophy. If readers are in some agreement with us, then we hope that they will read with a critical eye what we offer as one set of ways to exemplify this philosophy. That there are other, perhaps better, ways, we do not doubt. If our approach is a true one, then methods potential in it will emerge in time. In this project, then, we assumed the following upon which we built our research and our course:

a. that writing is a form of human behavior, but more specifically, is a form of human self-actualization, and in writing a person is satisfying his basic needs for self-affirmation as well as the immediate, practical needs for communication.

b. that once a person experiences a greater degree of theoretic control of this activity, he may find the necessary courage to attempt to perform the activity, and given some basic and minimum success, he will be encouraged to attempt it again, both for its own rewards and for the rewards that communication in practical life may offer.

c. that writing is an activity related intimately to esthetics as well as to logic, and a study of form-making may provide a basis for a study of words-in-combination that will lead to a greater skill in manipulating that process in one's own writing.

The Basic "Puzzle Form": The Archetype of the Plant

Our basic analogy or "puzzle form" was the archetype of the plant. From this organic perspective, we were able to conceive of writing as a process that shows continuous change in time as a result of some stimulus toward an end, that is, the pattern of growth. The plant, of course, was a common analogy in Romantic philosophy and literature, and the idiom of organic philosophy has been extensively articulated. Meyer Abrams, in his study of Romantic esthetics called The Mirror and the Lamp relates the plant analogy to the writing process in a way that we found valuable for ourselves and our students:

1. The plant originates in a seed. The whole is prior and primary, the parts secondary and derived.
2. The plant grows. "All is growth, evolution, genesis--each line, each word almost, begets the following. . ." In discussing a finished work, one must look toward the mental process which evolved it; criticism is, to some extent psychological.
3. The growing plant assimilates to its own substance alien and diverse elements. Images of sense become merely materials on which the mind feeds--materials which quite lose their identity in being assimilated to a new whole.

4. The plant evolves spontaneously from an internal source of energy. Unity is produced *ab intra*. The work has an inherent teleology.
5. The achieved structure of a plant is an organic unity. While the whole owes its being to the co-existence of the parts, the existence of that whole is a necessary condition to the survival of the parts. Each part is both ends and means.[6]

As this paradigm makes clear, different but essentially related things happen at different stages in the growth of a plant, and in the "growth" of a writing idea from thoughts and sensations into words on paper. If we conceive of writing as if it were such a process of growth, a series of events one after another in time, then we can assume that events along such a line can roughly be plotted. Upon the paradigm of plant we imposed, in turn, the concept of line (writing as a linear act) as a useful way of "freezing" the growth pattern of the plant metaphor into a static yet structured whole which then could be analyzed point by point. For example, the line could be divided into two major parts, that part of the entire activity called writing which occurs before words appear on the page, and that part after words on a page. The former we called "pre-writing," the latter "writing" and "re-writing." We concerned ourselves almost entirely with pre-writing both because we believed it to be the initial and crucial stage of the writing process, and because we believed it had not been given nearly enough of the theoretical attention it consequently deserved. We do not assume that "pre-writing" is any more than a part of the entire process; we firmly believe in all of the "craft-oriented" approaches to writing instruction that concern themselves mainly with those later stages we have called "writing" and "re-writing." We did not set out to design a whole course in writing; we hoped to clarify some of the initial stages of the entire writing process.

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[6] (New York: Norton, 1958), pp. 171-175.

From our relatively simple division of the line, we were able to give some "location" to the principal points of our investigation:

a. The active person where the line begins, the continual source of each subsequent point on the line as the self emerges and actualizes via words.

b. The act of conceptualization where the various materials of the active person's experience are shaped into the unified structures of concepts.

c. The act of concept-transference where the various concepts of a person's stored experience are "converted" into categories for the apprehension of and articulation of new experience.

Based upon the twin concepts of "plant-growth" and "line-process," we described the entire activity called "writing" as a person's transformation of the events of his life into experienced conceptual structures revealed in language for the sake of his own self-actualization and for communication with other persons through commonly shared patterns of meaning. In this research, we were less concerned with the techniques of communication, and more concerned with the questions of "transformation" and "actualization." Once we had set up our problem in this conceptual frame, we defined "pre-writing" as the stage of discovery in the writing process when a person transforms a "subject" into his own categories. Then we set out to:

a. Isolate and describe the principle of this transformation, and

b. Devise a course that would allow students to imitate its dynamics.

"Discovery" in the Writing Process

We did not presume to advance a new theory of creativity in this project; quite the contrary, we hoped to draw together and bring to bear upon the problem of writing a great many current accounts of the creative process by writers, philosophers, and psychologists. Typical of the introspective description of the formative stages of the writing process that many writers give is this account by John Ciardi. He calls what we have labelled "pre-writing" a groping process which is really without end, although "in time the good writer will acquire not only a sense of groping for but a sense of having groped to: he begins to know when he has finally reached whatever he was reaching for."[7] The paradox gives us an important clue, we believe, to the principle of pre-writing that we sought to isolate and describe: writers set out in apparent ignorance of what it is that they are groping for; yet they recognize it when they find it. In a sense, they knew all along, but it took some kind of heuristic process to make it conscious. When they have "groped to" their subject, they have discovered it; or more precisely, they have discovered how they and their subject "go" together.

Pre-writing, then, is that stage which concerns itself with "discovery." But we must attempt a more objective description of the process and the principle than Ciardi's subjective term "groping" will allow. Discovery of what? Not of some thing at all, but of a pattern of somethings. Bruner writes in his essay "The Act of Discovery," that, "Discovery, whether by a school boy going it on his own or by a scientist cultivating the growing edge of his field, is in its essence a matter of rearranging or transforming evidence in such a way that one is enabled to go beyond the evidence so reassembled to new insights."[8] Creation, as Denis de Rougement writes, is better understood not as absolute novelty, but as a different arrangement of elements already known according to laws known or knowable. Therefore it is more usefully thought of as composition.[9] Writing, as one form of creation, is more usefully thought of not as made up of words, but of combinations of words. Writing is an art of combination of words which fulfills the expectations of a formal design in our heads. The meaning of writing is the meaning of the combination, the pattern that the meanings of the many words make when fused by a writer's consciousness in the moment of discovery: "the growing plant assimilates to its own substance alien and diverse elements. . .materials which quite lose their identity in being assimilated to a new whole."

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[7] "On Writing and Bad Writing," Saturday Review, XLV, 10.

[8] On Knowing, pp. 82-83

[9] "Religion and the Mission of the Artist," The New Orpheus: Essays Toward a Christian Poetic, ed. Nathan A. Scott (New York, 1964), p. 60.

The late Dorothy Sayers wrote that this process involves what she called a "conversion" of "events" from the world into "experience" in a person. An "event" she distinguished as something that happens to one--but he does not necessarily experience it. You only experience a thing when you can express it to your own mind. A writer is a man who not only suffers the impact of external events, but experiences them. He puts the experience into words in his own mind, and in so doing recognizes the experience for what it is for him. To the extent that we can do that, we are all writers. A writer is simply a man like ourselves with an exceptional power of revealing his experience by expressing it, first to himself and then to others so that we recognize this experience as our own too. When an "event" is so recognized, it is converted from some thing happening to us into something happening in us. And something to which we happen. The writer gropes for those words which will cause this transformation.[10]

This "groping" is that kind of "thinking" which characterizes the imaginative encounter that writers typically make with the world of events. Too often, other definitions of the ambiguous concept "thinking" prevent our seeing just what it is that is typical of a writer's encounter with events. Much of what we loosely call "thinking" is "autistic," fantasies, day-dreams, the idle flitting from one half-formed notion to another. Another kind of "thinking" relates to the attempt deliberately to recall what we have perceived or learned in the past, i.e. "remembering." Somewhere in between the uncontrolled flow of autistic thoughts, and the deliberate attempt at recall comes imaginative thinking, that activity of mind which brings forth and develops ideas. It is allied to the process of conceiving, which includes consecutive logical procedures but much more besides. Essentially it is the imposition of pattern upon experience. Perhaps the differences between the "autistic" and the "imaginative" will be clearer if we proceed by analogy and say that "autistic" reverie is to a narrative what patterned imagination is to a plot. E. M. Forster, in his book Aspects of the Novel, defines a narrative as events in their simple time sequence, a tape-worm kind of thing with only an arbitrary beginning or ending. A plot, on the other hand, although also a narrative of sorts, places the emphasis upon causality. "The king died, and then the queen died" is a narrative. "The king died, and then the queen died of grief" is a plot. Preserved is the simple time sequence, but the sense of causality overshadows it. [11] Someone has "groped to" a discovery of a perspective upon the event, and subsequently imposed a pattern of meaning upon it, a pattern not contained in the event but in the mind of the beholder.

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[10] "Towards a Christian Aesthetic," ibid., pp. 14-15.

Several important conclusions can be drawn from this description of pre-writing as the stage of discovery in the entire writing process:

1. Such thinking-as-discovery must be distinguished from thinking-as-remembering, and from a conception of "writing" as a kind of simple recalling to mind of ideas "stored" in the head. Thinking-as-discovery is the crucial and initial stage of the total thinking-writing process: "The plant originates in a seed. The whole is prior and primary, the parts secondary and derived."

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[11] (New York: Harvest Books, 1954), p. 86.

2. In terms of cause and effect, stimulus and response, such thinking-as-discovery precedes writing: "The plant grows. 'All is growth, evolution, genesis--each line, each word almost, begets the following. . .'"

3. Good thinking-as-discovery can produce good writing; and conversely, without good thinking-as-discovery, good writing is impossible: "The plant evolves spontaneously from an internal source of energy. Unity is produced ab intra. The work has an inherent teleology."

4. Good thinking-as-discovery does not always lead to good writing; but bad thinking (simple remembering without pattern) can never lead to good writing.

5. A failure to make a useful distinction between thinking-as-discovery and writing has led to a fundamental misconception which undermines many of our best efforts to teach writing: that if we train students how to recognize an example of good prose (the rhetoric of the finished word), we have given them a basis on which to build their own writing abilities. All we have done, in fact, is to give them standards to judge the goodness or badness of their finished effort. We have not really taught them how to make that effort.

6. A knowledge of standards is not enough to produce good writing; in practice such critical principles usually have a negative value: students are enabled to recognize more vividly their own inadequacies.

7. From a creative point of view, the standards established by the rhetoric of the finished word are too remote, too abstract. It is not enough to know about goodness; we must know it from experience. Whereas the classical practice of imitation held up the finished masterpiece for emulation, we sought ways for our students to imitate the creative principle of discovery itself which makes possible a finished work. Unless we can somehow introduce students to the dynamics of creative discovery, we too often simply discourage their hopes of ever writing well at all. The way to make schooling "count,"

as Bruner writes in THE PROCESS OF EDUCATION[12] is to give students an understanding (and, we would add, an experience) of the fundamental structure of whatever subjects they take.[13]

The Subjective Tradition

We follow, in our assumption that discovery is essential, a tradition that runs from Coleridge to Ernst Cassirer and Susanne Langer. The key to this philosophy is that the human response to everything is constructive, not passive. The reigning scientific tradition in the schools, however, derives from that attitude which treats reality as object, admitting but bemoaning a certain amount of subjectivity in the process of thought; its drive is toward the clear and distinct idea. We place a greater emphasis upon the role of the subjective in our knowledge of anything, and we assume that an approach to writing which assumes constructive response to experience leads practically to better essays. As Susanne Langer writes, the mind sorts "raw" experience into categories possessed by the self which then act as "screens" through which we view the world, "screens" not contained in the world of sheer events but added to it by us, as we add "plot" to the simple concatenation of happenings in our lives. In her book PHILOSOPHY IN A NEW KEY, Miss Langer writes

> Our merest sense-experience is a process of formulation. The world that actually meets our senses is not a world of "things" about which we are invited to discover facts as soon as we

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[12] (Cambridge, 1962), p. 11.

[13] We shall be talking about two different although related kinds of structure in the pages that follow: that which Bruner refers to as the fundamental organization of a subject such as mathematics or biology; and that specific pattern which a writer gives to an essay. The first relates to the principle of pre-writing, the combinatorial and assimilative activity of all writers' thinking; the second is any particular result of that principle which gives unity, coherence, and emphasis to a particular essay. To keep the two separate, we shall use "structure" to refer to the principle of pre-writing; and we shall use "pattern" to refer to the individual organization that we discover as a result in any essay.

> have codified the necessary logical language to do so: the world of pure sensation is so complex, so fluid and full, that sheer sensibility to stimuli would only encounter what William James has called (in a characteristic phrase) "a blooming, buzzing confusion." Out of this bedlam our sense-organs must select certain predominant forms, if they are to make report of things and not of mere dissolving sensa. The eye and ear must have their logic---their "categories of understanding," if you like the Kantian idiom, or their "primary understanding," in Coleridge's version of the same concept. An object is not a datum, but a form construed by the sensitive and intelligent organ, a form which is at once an experienced individual thing and a symbol for the concept of it, for *this sort of thing*.[14]

In other words, as Philip Wheelwright remarks, all human knowledge is precisely that--*human* knowledge, *somebody's* knowledge, a *person's* knowledge. All so-called "objective" knowledge is inevitably entangled in nets of the "subjective." Anytime anybody is awake and reacting to life around him he is bringing to bear although perhaps unconsciously his entire human self: his past perceptions, his memory, his emotional life, his intellectual life, and so on. To speak at all is to illuminate the world as it is beheld in one's own perspective.[15] As Wheelwright continues, "Things have contexts, but only a person has perspectives. The essential structure *of* writing, then, is a matter of creating perspective, and the essential excuse *for* writing is to unveil as best one can some perspective that has not already become ordered into a public map."[16] The human response to anything, all this is a way of saying, is always partisan. "Even the most banal cliche or the most plainly factual report is formulated from a certain standpoint, and represents a certain trend of associations and expectations. The difference is not between the perspectival and the universal; for every universal is perspectivally conceived.

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[14] (New York: Pelican Books, 1948), p. 72.

[15] *Metaphor and Reality* (Bloomington, 1962), p. 16

[16] *Ibid*.

The difference is between perspectives that have become standardized and perspectives that are freshly born and individual."[17] From our point of view, the primary badness of writing is not incorrect grammar or inelegant expression; it is rather a matter of stale perspective, cliché response. Such stale perspectives can never produce a person's knowledge if only because they do not and never have belonged to the particular person attempting to impose them on experience. Usually such writing, no matter how "correct," is merely a gumming together of long strips of words which refer to nothing more than other words without anywhere a vital touch with anyone or anything.

Traditional approaches to the writing process are, we believe, inadequate if they fail to take account of the radically perspectival nature of writing. Typically such approaches stress only the virtues of hindsight--the "rhetoric of the finished word"--without giving attention to the primary necessity of insight--the stage of discovery in shaping experience into perspective. To be complete, a theory of composition must assume that the mind is not simply a mirror; it is in addition a lamp.

The Person in the Process

If writing, inevitably, is radically perspectival, then no attempt to account for it or practice it can neglect to give the person in the process his due. Ours is an age so dominated by machine analogies that we find it difficult to conceive of any process without some mechanism to account for it. But we premise that writing is more like a growing process than a mechanical one. And every growth begins in germination which released the "vitality" that starts the plant growing. Unless we can engage our students as persons in the experience of pre-writing, we have failed in fact to provide them with the key to any subsequent models for concept formation and transference.

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[17] Ibid.

By person we mean one who stands at the center of his own thoughts and feelings with the sense that they begin in him. He is concerned to make things happen and not simply to allow things to happen to him; he seeks to dominate his circumstances with words or actions. Rollo May writes, "Any penetrating explanation of the creative process must take it as the expression of the normal man in the act of actualizing himself, not as the product of sickness but representing the highest degree of emotional health." The essential, May continues, "is not the presence or absence of voluntary effort, but the degree of absorption, the degree of intensity. . .; there must be a specific quality of engagement."[18] Such engagement or what May calls "encounter," represents a real relationship with the objective world, impossible to anyone not taking himself seriously as a person. This relationship is a continual dialectical process between the world and self, "a process interrelating the person and his world."

In writing, we may say, every occasion for words presents the writer with two interrelations to discover. The first is the interrelation between materials within the "subject matrix," that is, those things about a subject that may be learned inductively, and those ways that we may group these things. according to prior norms of order: cause and effect, definition, narration, etc. But as we have assumed throughout this research, the writer has another, more crucial and primary interrelation to make within the "personal matrix," that assimilation of one's self experienced as a person when confronted with a subject needing expression. Without a successful discovery of this interrelation, we can never have that kind of writing which we have called good: "some perspective that has not already become ordered into a public map."

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[18] "The Nature of Creativity," ETC: A Review of General Semantics, XVI, No. 3 (Spring, 1959), 264.

We make such a point of the role of a person in the writing process because, as teachers of writing, we have so often observed that when students sit down to write, their sense of their reality as persons gets tucked away, and they begin merely to echo all the pat phrases of their culture in essentially meaningless combination. Perhaps because of the excessive emphasis upon extrinsic standards of goodness in writing common to many classrooms, perhaps because of an "other-directed" age, they have not been encouraged or even permitted to experience real involvement in their writing. They have not been taught to believe that it is either possible or desirable to become involved when playing the role of writer. Many who in other roles find self-affirmation and self-acceptance both possible and highly desirable fail to maintain that vitality when engaged in the special behavior known as writing. Both their estimation of their own potential success as writers, and their sense of what goodness in writing means ("good manners"), inhibit their chances of self-affirmation and hence of real discovery in their writing. Yet we maintain that such self-affirmation is the "payoff matrix" which germinates the vitality essential to real goodness in writing. Within self-affirmation--the absolute willingness to think one's own thoughts, feel one's own feelings--we find the basis for motivation for any writing that pretends to freshness. We believe that both our culture and our pedagogical methods have encouraged "other-directed" self-images which hinder this kind of writing and which, in fact, hinder any kind of writing. As a result, we have almost a national neurosis about writing, with no object for our anxiety except a vague and increasingly discredited code of "correctness." As one is expected to write acceptable grammar, and as one is expected to choose acceptable diction, so one is expected to think acceptable thoughts, and feel acceptable feelings.

We believe it is both possible and desirable to amend this situation: to give to students some insight into the role they must play when they write if they would hope to discover real possibilities in their subject; and, in addition, to give students some experience of success in playing that role which may, in turn, release that vitality that makes possible real improvement in writing, improvement first in essential pattern, improvement also in extern form.

Summary of Part I: the Principle of Pre-Writing

Ours is what might be called an existential approach to composition: in effect, we are seeking an image of man within the process that mobilized the "mechanisms" of problem-solving. Our existential premise is that truth exists for the individual only as he himself produces it in action. Our approach stresses the importance of decision and commitment of the person in the pre-writing stages in order that discovery may follow. As we believe there is no truth without participation for the individual, we say also that there is no essential goodness in an essay without evidence of such commitment. The writer comes alive only when he feels the creative process as potential within him, and his essay comes alive only from such an encounter. We do not deny the validity of extrinsic approaches to composition and to writers, with their emphasis upon methods, tradition, conditioning, grammar and the like; we only hold that these alone and these first will never produce good writing defined as fresh perspective. More than that, such approaches can be positively harmful by reducing writing and writers to "things" on machine analogies. They substitute abstractions and concepts for the writer and his composition. Each writer always transcends the mechanisms and experiences discovery in his unique way. The person does not have meaning in terms of the mechanism; the mechanism may have meaning in terms of the person. Essentially our project begins with the existential as a necessary attitude. It then seeks to develop some appropriate techniques to pracitce that attitude; but the techniques without the attitude are worthless.

Part II: The Practice of Pre-Writing

Our practical problem was to devise ways that students might imitate the principle of pre-writing. We employed three means chiefly: (1) the keeping of a journal, (2) the practice of some principles derived from the religious discipline of meditation, and (3) the use of the analogy. That there are other possible ways of involving students in the experience of pre-writing, we are sure; these simply happen to be the ways that we tried in this one project.

The Journal

Because we assumed that the process of assimilation and transformation was nothing if not personal, we began our course by asking students to keep a journal. We defined a journal as a record of the mind to distinguish it from the diary which is a record of what a person does. Although the distinction is not absolute, we emphasized that we were more interested in what students thought than in what they did. At the beginning of the course, we gave each student a long list of questions which, we hoped, would provoke him to writing in his journal, questions that related to a wide variety of typical concerns that every person has: where he came from, where he thought he was going, what he liked, what he disliked, and so forth. By writing on these questions, or at least on some of them, students would begin that process of bringing to awareness where exactly they stood on a whole variety of questions. By answering first our questions and then, as they progressed, answering their own questions, we hoped to engage them in a kind of concept-formation that would prepare them for the subsequent techniques of the meditation and the analogy. But more than this, since we discovered that in their journals as in their typical essays, these students were altogether too ready to form concepts for experience--cliché concepts--we demanded that in their journals they concentrate upon the concerete details of their lives. We sought to drive them back and away from the merely automatic language which they had inherited from their culture. We encouraged them to practice thinking less generally (and glibly) and more concretely, stressing the value of achieving a personal sense of what is real.

A major problem arises in any class where students must keep a journal which is then read by an instructor. A student is expected to write sincerely, even intimately, in his journal; yet he knows that ultimately what he says will pass before the eyes of a stranger, his instructor. Realistically, no one could expect an absolute authenticity of statement ever to result from such a situation. However, with care, one can encourage a greater degree of integrity of statement in a journal than is ever possible in the formal, "public" occasions of essays. We surrounded the journal with a maximum of psychological safety to permit a maximum of psychological freedom within it: we never discussed specific journals or entries in class; we never showed one student's journal to another student; we never marked anything in a journal but made whatever comments we might have in conference or on separate sheets of paper inserted into the journal; we treated each student as a person, in other words, with a right to privacy and sympathetic understanding. Only under such conditions, will the journal "method" work at all. As much as possible, we tried to put our students at ease before their own words to counteract what we have characterized as a national, inhibiting neurosis about our performance in language.

We believe that limited though the actual psychological freedom thus achieved was, it was a real advance beyond the psychology of the classroom of judge and judged, and within it, we believe, we achieved a significant degree of personal encounter of students with their experience. Many students were able, sooner or later, to discover which were their categories, which were not.

By the very fact that they were encouraged to write habitually, those points of view upon experience which were especially theirs were more likely to emerge over a period of time. We discovered that on the average it took over half a term of ten weeks before most of our students' journals took on that degree of freshness and honesty that we were looking for, half a term before students felt free enough in front of their words (and in front of their sympathetic instructor) to abandon the merely "acceptable and appropriate" responses and start exploring their own.

In "plotting" the order of events along the line of writing that we described earlier, we assumed that a writer is first a person aware of himself and full of potential, structured response to new experience. The journal was one way we sought to put our recruit-writers through a basic training in such awareness. Later in the process of concept-formation and concept-transference, we assumed that such points-of-view as they had discovered to be personally real and urgent for them would assimilate and transform the events of their assigned theme topics into the real and personal categories of their own experience. That moment when a writer knows he has "groped to" his pattern, we called, in our course, "the point of urgency," which could be roughly described as a point of view made up of a combination of a personal sense of the real and a known structure of experience. A known structure is not enough in itself for urgency; there must be a personal enlistment in its meaning. To put it another way, the seed-concept from which an essay will grow must not simply be known about, it must be known, i.e. involved in that noumenal sense of one's own presence to himself. Toward such an encounter, we hoped to lead students in the habit of journalizing.

The Meditation

The second technique we used to give students a chance to practice the experience of pre-writing was to use some principles taken from the religious discipline of the meditation. Again because we assumed that writing is a personally transformed "conversion" of an "event" into an "experience," we were attracted to the meditation which seeks a similar conversion of religious doctrine into religious experience. The meditation seemed to offer a model for that kind of discovery which we had premised as the basis of the pre-writing experience. The meditation might loosely be described as what Weldon calls a "puzzle form," a technique for recasting a difficulty with minimum personal definition (a religious idea) into the terms of a "puzzle" in which there is a set of givens and a set of procedures which seek to move the supplicant from the state of knowing about a religious idea to the state of knowing it experientially. The "givens" are a set of questions, asked in such a way that a petitioner can move from confrontation with what Whitehead calls the "inert idea" to the experience of that idea. As one Catholic writer describes it, the meditation is "the march of the self to God through event. . . ."[19]

More than mere "event," the meditation sought to engage a person's affections "to seek, and know, and as it were to taste some divine matter; from whence doth arise in our affectionate powers good motions, inclinations, and purposes which stir us up to the love and exercise of virtue, and the hatred and avoiding of sin," as one Renaissance writer upon the meditation explained.[20]

The meditative way customarily is divided into a regular sequence of steps: Preparation, Meditation proper (divided into "points,") and Colloquies. The most pertinent part of the entire meditative process to our intentions lay in the Preparation, since "pre-writing" was in our terms, a preparation for subsequent writing. The preparatory step in most schools of meditation is called

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[19] Fr. William F. Lynch, Christ and Apollo (New York: Mentor-Omega, 1960), p. 69.

[20] Cited in Louis L. Martz, The Poetry of Meditation: A Study in English Religious Literature of the Seventeenth Century (New Haven, 1962), p. 14.

"the composition of place." The sense of composition intended here is different from, though related to, that esthetic sense of composition mentioned earlier, the sense of forming words into patterns of meaning. Here what is meant is a psychological disposition of one's attention to provide one's self with a concrete representation of the subject being meditated. By "seeing the spot," by constructing the mise en scène of the subject, one could then have some sensuous reaction to it, one could then "taste" it. And in the sensuous, we discover the personal engagement which we posited as the goal of pre-writing activity. The invisible is made visible by the image-forming faculty of the mind. For instance, to meditate upon Christ's coming, a petitioner is asked to see the spot, the stable in which Christ was born, to involve himself as completely as possible in the dramatic tensions of that occurrence. As Saint Bonaventure writes in one place in his Life of Christ, "Thou, if thou desirest to gather fruit from these things, shouldest so place thyself in the presence of our Lord as if thou didst hear with thine ears His very words, and see with thine eyes His deeds, fixing thy whole mind and affections upon Him attentively, leisurely, and with delight, setting aside for the time all other thoughts and anxieties." In this last remark we see another potential benefit from this exercise: not only does such concrete representation make possible a personal encounter with the subject being meditated, but it as well helps to fix the attention and control the merely "autistic" wanderings of the mind which tend to disperse the best intentions of student writers.

In meditating upon abstract concepts rather than upon actual events, the petitioner was asked to make a different kind of "composition of place." Here he had to imagine a concrete and vivid setting for a meditation on invisible things such as sin, hell, judgment, redemption, and so forth. For example, in a meditation upon sins, Saint Ignatius says, "the composition will be to see with the eyes of the imagination and to consider that my soul is imprisoned in this corruptible body, and my whole self in this vale of misery, as it were in exile among brute beasts." The Jesuit Puente writes that, "If I am to think upon hell, I will imagine some place like an obscure, straight and horrible dungeon full of fire, and the souls therein burning in the midst of those flames. And if I am to meditate on the birth of Christ, I will form the figure of some open place without shelter, and a child wrapped in swaddling clothes, laid in a manger, and so in the rest." In James Joyce's novel _A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man_, there is a famous parody of a meditation in the sermon that Father Arnall preaches on hell. Hell is described in terms of each of the five senses to make vivid through each portal of human awareness the torments of the damned.

Whatever the method, the result was to "lock up our spirit as it were within the closet of the mystery which we mean to meditate." The effect is an intense, deliberate focussing of the mind within the bounds of the subject either by imaginary representation or by a simple proposing and conceit of it (if not of the senses), or some concrete similitude dramatizing spiritual ideas. This habit of feeling theological issues as a part of a concrete, dramatic scene is stressed by writers on the meditation as all-important.[21]

In the meditation proper, which we did not stress in our course of prewriting, division is made according to the "three powers" of the mind: memory, understanding, and will. First the person passes that which he is meditating through his memory; with consciousness renewed and heighted by memory, he then makes,with his understanding, several considerations about the substance of the meditation in an attempt to search out truths that lie within the occasion.

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[21] Martz, pp. 29-30.

Finally, with the will, conclusions for action are drawn from the truths discovered with the understanding. Martz concludes, "Meditation focused and disciplined the powers that a man already possessed, both his innate powers and his acquired modes of logical analysis and rhetorical development."[22]

As meditation is more than study, so writing is more than learning about a subject. When we meditate, we seek a sharpened purpose and heightened affections to the end of moral renovation. When we write, we attempt to throw a fresh and personally experienced perspective upon a subject, to the end of self-actualization and significant communication with others. Both meditation and writing (as we conceive of it) have as their end modified behavior. Both seek what Miss Sayers called a "conversion," the one literally, the other figuratively. Both propose to take the "events" of our lives, whether of ideas or of circumstances, and "convert" them into experiences, that is, to change them from things happening to us into things happening in us. Both seek a personally transformed sense of the real "so that the old truth may shine out before us with a new lustre, and continual freshness, and an individual correspondence of life."[23]

Many of our students, and many of our critics, have alleged that the meditation seems to them a kind of Procrustean bed on which all souls alike were to be stretched, and so it seemed to be the very antithesis of that psychological freedom which we had proposed as the "payoff matrix" for pre-writing. But we believe that such a view is to notice the details and not the purpose and effects of the meditation. In spite of what it might seem to do to the contrary, the successful meditation in fact does release precisely that "vitality" which makes possible creative discovery. It does this, we believe, for at least two good reasons: it takes for granted that emotion is attached to the concrete experience of a thing; and in addition it insists upon the necessary and full reality of time within which discovery can take place. Too often, that is, in our mystique of the creative process, we assume that time is abolished in a sudden and quite miraculous illumination. Although the final point of insight may in fact seem to ocme without cause, in fact successful creation and successful meditation always favor the well-prepared mind. Preparation involves both the "stocking" of the mind with "events" (which only time, not teachers, can do), and in addition, preparation involves a practice of attention in a meaningful and fruitful way to the dynamics of response such as is provided for in the preparatory steps of the meditative discipline. The meditation is, as Father Lynch writes, an "event structure" (not "event" as Miss Sayers uses the term, but simply "event" as this occurrence and then that occurrence), one thing after another in meaningful sequence. "Magical or instantaneous methods of getting at God are marked by a hatred and fear of human time and of the full, long human process."[24] The meditation provides in "puzzle" form the experience of creation itself: a growth through moments along a line until a "flowering" of concept or idea within the mind. It emphasizes in a structured way "in unified and sharp strokes, time, detail, definiteness, actuality, and glory."[25] It is a technique to enter into "an historical, actual and eventful set of facts which penetrate reality to the hilt."[26]

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[22] Ibid., p. 39.

[23] Ibid., p. 210.

We conceive of our use of some principles derived from the meditation not as a Procrustean bed, but as a model form of the creative experience itself which, when practiced sincerely by a person, does not so much bind as set him free for real encounter with himself and his world.

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[24] Lynch, p. 65.

[25] Ibid., p. 67.

[26] Ibid., p. 69.

One final advantage: psychologists recognize that in studying concept-attainment, it is useful to externalize for observation as many of the decisions as can possibly be brought into the open in the hope that regularities in these decisions might provide a basis for making better inferences about the processes involved.[27] A similar objective inspired the creators of the meditative way: to provide a regularity and a visibility to devotional decisions so as to assist those seeking religious insight all along the way. By using a parallel technique in teaching pre-writing, we may give a somewhat greater degree of "visibility" to the necessarily hidden processes of thinking and conceptualizing. The meditation, once mastered by students, provided something of a formal model "out there" and apart from themselves which could take on its own destiny. They could come to serve it when it was thus more objectified, and consequently could involve themselves more intensely and more systematically in its perfection. Although a new experience for most of our students, and greeted with a good deal of suspicion and distrust, the discipline of the meditation did provide some with a way to set apart the merely "austistic" ramblings of their thinking, to give their attention a meaning and a form, a discipline to insight.

The Analogy

The third major approach we used to permit students to imitate the dynamics of pre-writing is the analogy. The journal encouraged self-discovery; the meditation put into their hands a "puzzle form" for discovery within a topic; the analogy, we hoped, would illustrate the bisociation of experience and the implications of this fact for writing. Analogy refers, in its broadest sense, to that principle of all human knowing whereby we are enabled to know anything in our present experience because we relate it to something already known (categorized) in our past. It is that instant inference from new events back to past experience; each act of present awareness bisociates that present with a past as another instance of that sort of thing. Analogy in this sense is related to apperception: every impression that comes in from without, whether a sentence we hear, an object we see, an odor we smell, no sooner enters our consciousness than it is taken off in some determinate direction or other, making connection with other materials already there, and finally producing what we call our reaction. Not the "thing itself" any longer, but our sort of thing, shaped by our imagination in dynamic reaction against the invasion of strangeness into its borders.

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[27] See Bruner _et al._, _A Study of Thinking_, p. 54.

It was precisely the ease with which students apperceive their experience that forced us back from our original starting point of concept-formation. For students were too quick to relate their encounters with events to determinate "acceptable" categories, and consequently produced merely "hasty labels" for concepts. There was developed in them little tension between what we have called the "subject matrix" and the "personal matrix" because the "personal" hardly existed. Their reactions were altogether too predictable and cliche. They had not taken the time necessary, nor had felt the freedom and the will to experience a discovery within their encounters with events. Discovery, of course, means the awareness of an anomaly: experience has somehow changed its pattern in the collision of newness with sameness. Students attended only indifferently to newness, however, and consequently saw and heard, tasted and felt, little of it concretely. Our problem was to, somehow, take advantage of the constructive response of our analogical apperceptions, but at the same time bring a greater degree of freshness to that response than students ordinarily possessed. In the process of their apperceptions, the sameness had to be stretched to fit the newness possible in perception.

Already in the course, we had begun to prepare them for this experience. In the journal, we had asked them to "collect themselves" into conscious awarenesses. Upon the richness of our stored experience depends any success in fresh analogical inference. It is the fate of every new event to fall into a mind preoccupied with memories, ideas, and interests, and by these taken in. Each new event, as William James writes, if it is to be seen at all, always reminds us of something similar in quality, or of some context that might have surrounded it before. This mental escort which the mind supplies is drawn, of course, from the mind's ready-made stock. Depending upon how rich or how poor that stock is, we conceive the impression in some definite way and we dispose of it according to our acquired possibilities.[28] As Dorothy Sayers wrote, "the perception of likenesses, the relating of like things to form a new unity, and the words 'as if' pretty well describe the creative process behind writing."

The practical question which this view of creative activity raises is: can this sort of analogical relatedness, common to our everyday perception of things, be directed toward the accomplishment of the specific tasks of writing essays? Can we draw upon a latent ability to make analogies in general to provide the stimulus for fresh discovery in the pre-writing of essays? There is substantial agreement that a stimulus of some sort is involved in the beginning of the creative process. It can arise from outside in the form of a striking occurrence or physical object. It can be a combination of outside image and an inner recall, a linking of concrete event with stored memory. Or it can be an almost wholly conscious self-stimulation in which one sets up intellectually the goal of writing something. Virtually all first-rate creative people describe a combination of the first two and abjure the third as less significant.[29] By stressing the analogy, we hoped to provoke that linking of present with past which characterizes the assimilation of the anomaly, discovery. We thought it possible, somewhat mechanically, to induce this sort of activity and in the process germinate yet more profound associations, or at least increase a student's consciousness of the process of bisociation.

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[28] Talks to Teachers on Psychology (New York: Norton, 1958), pp. 108-116.

We determined to fashion exercises that would allow students to practice this principle of bisociation no matter how large or small their stock of mental capital. If the principle is, in fact, true to all human awareness, then it must be capable of being demonstrated in some meaningful way to students of whatever sophistication and experience. First we had to create in our classrooms the psychological freedom that would permit interplay between a student's present and his past. He had to escape from that pervasive and deadly second-handedness which afflicts so much average response to anything. "Learned conventions can be windowless fortresses which exclude viewing the world in new ways," as one psychologist writes.[29a] We encouraged students to indulge in that most primitive of all human responses: wonder, the ability to make the familiar strange. Our classrooms had to have a much higher degree of permissiveness in the things allowed to be written than is usually the case in writing courses. On the student's part, we encouraged that in their journa they seek a low threshold of discrimination in what they allowed themselves to reflect upon. The pre-writer needs all the psychological safety he can get in order to play his role effectively. Once students had begun to shatter the perceived world into parts agina, we taught them that their job then was to re-assemble it into new shapes and patterns.

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[29] Robert N. Wilson, Man Made Plain: The Poet in Contemporary Society (Cleveland, 1958), p. 62 ff.

[29a] William J. J. Gordon, Synectics: The Development of Creative Capacity (New York, 1961), p. 92.

What Miss Sayers called the "as if attitude" is merely the adult extension of the childish habit of play, for play is a treating of the familiar world "as if" it were something else, the rug as if it were a battlefield, the wagon as if it were a stagecoach. But play is not merely childish; it is one of the archetypal forms of human activity. Johan Huizinga writes, "Take language for instance--that first and supreme instrument which man shapes in order to communicate, to teach, to command. Language allows him to distinguish, to establish, to state things; in short, to name them and by naming them to raise them into the domain of the spirit. In the making of speech and language the spirit is continually 'sparking' between matter and mind, as it were, playing with this wondrous nominative faculty. Behind every abstract expression there lies the boldest of metaphors, and every metaphor is a play upon words. Thus in giving expression to life man creates a second, poetic world alongside the world of nature."[30]

The pre-writer's play involves the constructive use of illusion, conscious self-deceit, daydreams, associations which imply no immediate benefit, the willingness to manipulate words, concepts, everyday assumptions, toying with apparently irrelevant objects and things. The pre-writer's play, as we tried to instruct our students, was not merely a lighthearted waste of time, but a potentially profound order of constructive effort, corresponding on a conscious level with the unconscious "play" of bisociation within everyone's experience.

As well as encouraging them in general ways to "escape their categories," we provided them with specific exercises to encourage this kind of constructive response to events, to give them some experience of converting events into what Miss Sayers calls "experience": something no longer merely happening to but now in them. We moved from what we might call the general principle of analogy to the specific instance of this activity: the concrete analogy. The concrete analogy is a form of comparison which infers that because two things are alike in one way, they are alike in many or all ways. As a species of inductive logic, the concrete analogy is regarded with suspicion. For it is manifestly true that things alike in one way may be very unlike in other ways. However, we did not approach the analogy from the logician's perspective. Rather we were interested in its form-making potential, and its ability to give students the experience of literary creation in a microcosm, as it were. Analogically to view A in terms of B is to give frontiers and "interior distance" to A. It is to shape A. And in concrete analogy, the shape is one drawn from the perceived world of time and place. The semantic "movement" in such analogical inference parallels the "event structure" of the meditation: from the more concrete and readily graspable events to what is vaguer, problematic, and undiscovered. For example, in the common analogy, "Life is a dream," the idea of life, which is the tenor of the sentence, is relatively vague and problematic, whereas a dream is something of which everyone has memories. Accordingly, dreaming can be offered as a semantic vehicle for those possibly similar aspects of life which it is desired to bring to the attention. Such analogical inference is what one philosopher calls "sort-crossing": it presents the facts belonging to one category in the idioms appropriate to another.[31] Such crossing enables writers to "stereoscope"events and achieve, as a result, an integration of diversities. The vehicle of the analogy acts as a screen through which we look at the world from a certain perspective. It becomes, to use the phrase of Weldon, a "puzzle form" to convert "difficulties" with minimum definition to "puzzles" with "borders" and "teleologies."

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[30] Homo Ludens (London, 1949), p. 4.

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[31] Colin Turbayne, The Myth of Metaphor (New Haven, 1962), p. 33.

As the following chapter on "Procedure" will illustrate, we used various exercises to allow students to practice "sort-crossing." It was one way, we believe, to mobilize in them the dynamics of discovery; by the forced juxtapositioning of two unrelated "subjects", we hoped to set their minds in motion discovering perspectives and, in the process, new idioms, to describe one subject in terms of the other. And because we stressed the concrete analogy, we provided them with a vehicle for "in-forming" events that converted them into affective experiences. Analogy, as we used it in these exercises, gave students an opportunity to experience new conceptual relations between things, the basis for pre-writing activity.

All organized writing, we assumed, is essentially the result of analogical inference in its largest sense, the imposition of one set of experiences upon another. The writer, consciously or unconsciously,aapplies a structured perspective to a subject and discovers if the structure of his vehicle suggests or reveals to him true structural possibilities in his subject matter. He is groping for this perspective; with patience, skill--and luck--he may grope to it. The key insight then sets up the "ecology" of all other ideas within the environment of the essay. A writer applies to his subject, originally dark and nebulous, a variety of approaches or perspectives, i.e. a variety of structured ways of looking at events. He then decides in what ways his subject matter responds, or resembles the organization of his perspective. To the extent that he discovered such resemblances, to that same extent he is enabled to say organized things about his subject.

In summary, we sought to use the heuristic potential within the concept of analogical transference (inter-classification) to germinate discovery in students, and to provide them with structure for their essays. The interlocking of two previously unrelated "matrices" of thought is a common enough psychic occurrence to encourage us to believe it can be exploited to constitute a basic pattern of discovery among student writers. Usually this activity takes place underground, in the unconscious. The process which involves abstraction and generalization--abstraction of certain features of one event and their generalization to fit the occasion of another--is still left largely unexplained in psychology. And in profound analogical discovery, upon which systems are based, the real achievement is in seeing an analogy where no one saw one before. Arthur Koestler writes in his book The Act of Creation:

> The scientist who sets out to solve a problem looks at it from various angles, through glasses of different colours, as it were--in the jargon of the present theory, he experiments with various matrices, hoping that one will fit. If it is a routine problem of a familiar type, he will soon discover some aspect of it which is similar in some respect to other problems encountered in the past, and thus allows him to come to grips with it. . . . To put it in a different way: solving a problem means bridging a gap; and for routine problems there usually exist matrices--various types of prefabricated bridges--which will do the job; though it may require a certain amount of sweat to adjust them to the terrain.
>
> But in original discoveries, no single pre-fabricated matrix is adequate to bridge the gap. There may be some similarities with past situations, but these may be more misleading than helpful. . . . Here the only salvation lies in hitting on an auxiliary matrix in a previously unrelated field. . .[32]

The essence of original discovery is in the marriage of previously unrelated frames of reference or universes of discourse. The search requires long and arduous striving--plus a well-furnished mind to draw upon. No writing teacher can give the student what only the years can give. It may be possible, however, on some significant level, to introduce him to the heuristics of analogical discovery as a type-form of higher-level discoveries he may someday make.

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[32] (New York, 1964), p. 201.

CHAPTER III

PROCEDURE

Introduction

The English Department of Michigan State University gave us three sections of English 213, a sophomore level course in expository writing, in which to test our experimental hypotheses. We decided at the outset that we could not abandon the traditional purpose of this course--the production of coherent, well-organized expository essays. But the accomplishment of this purpose was to be approached from the point of view of the pre-writing stages. Our experimental question thus became: Whether a writing course, placing its emphasis on the pre-writing stages, and including a series of exercises designed to help students form effective concepts for writing, could succeed in the production of better essays?

In the design of this course we faced a number of problems. First, there was the difficulty of converting our hypotheses into a set of categories useable in the classroom. We did not intend to lead our students, with their great variety of academic backgrounds and vocational expectations, into an intense theoretical investigation of the concept-forming process; we were concerned with the practical end of changing behavior, of helping them to produce better essays. Consequently, many of our assumptions about the nature of the pre-writing stages were re-cast into metaphorical terms, and so presented to the students. The use of metaphors to convey necessary information provided us with certain rhetorical advantages. Students were not burdened with an abstract weight of theoretical analysis. Instead, their understanding of the pre-writing stages was organized around a few relatively simple ideas, many of which had a concrete appeal. For example, in our discussion of the necessary personal involvement with a subject, we used the phrase "taste of self." Many of our classroom metaphors also contained implicit directions: students were told to search for a "seed-idea" out of which an organically coherent essay might "grow." These metaphors were easy to remember, and the instructors found them to be convenient touchstones around which to organize their presentation.

The second problem that faced us was the design of the course as a whole. We decided that students had to be led gradually into a knowledge of, and practice in, the pre-writing stages. There would be no point, we felt, in presenting an entire description of these stages without also having students act their way, step by step, through these stages. Thus the order in which we presented our material was determined by our over-all conception of the order of events in the linear act of pre-writing. Students were not asked to write complete essays until the term was almost half-over, that is, not before we felt them sufficiently trained in what we have called the "rhetoric of the mind." In essence, then, the presentation of our material was determined by our conception of the stages of the mind's act of discovery. While we did not pretend to ourselves that our version of this activity was definitive, we felt that it was reasonably accurate, and at least clear enough in its outlines to provide the organizing principle of a course. We were aware of the arbitrary way in which we imposed a temporal sequence upon this activity--who can pinpoint the when of what happens in the creative act?--but faced with the task of translating the stages of pre-writing into the temporal sequence of a course, we had to assume as best we could.

Cur general strategy might be described as follows: to begin by explaining to students the kind of attitude necessary for writing success, and to urge them to adopt this attitude toward their activity in the course; then to lead students through a description of the pre-writing stages and to have them actively participate in these stages through a series of exercises; then to give students the experience of bringing to bear their developing skill in pre-writing on the task of writing complete essays. In planning this strategy we had three specific aims in mind: 1) to revise fundamental attitudes about the nature of writing, and to encourage students to adopt a certain self-image of themselves as writers, out of which grow, we assume, both good motivation and the possibility of success in writing; 2) to give students specific training in the "rhetoric of the mind," to allow students to participate *for themselves* in the act of discovery; 3) to show students how an active engagement with the stages of pre-writing is useful for the production of coherent, organically whole essays.

Description of Experimental Course

The experimental course was divided into six units. Each unit was given a title containing certain key phrases descriptive of the practical goal sought in the unit. The units themselves were made up of a great variety of materials which were distributed to the students as the need arose: selected passages from various authors which illustrated ideas we wished to emphasize; complete essays, some of which were discussed in terms of content, others as models illustrating certain writing techniques; exercises to be done by students, involving the use of paradigms and exemplifying various stages of the pre-writing act. In addition, students were required to keep journals throughout the course. And at least once a week an in-class critique was held in which the instructor led students in a discussion of samples of their recent work. The titles of the six units of the course are: I. The Writer's Mask: the Role to be Played; II. The Escape from the Category: the Return to the Concrete; III. The Escape from Alien Masks: Thought-Clichés; IV. The Point of Urgency: the Seed Idea; V. The Principle of As-If and the Concrete Analogy; VI. Finding and Refining the Perspective.

Unit I--The Writer's Mask: the Role to be Played

The general strategy of Unit I was to make students aware that the course was experimental in nature and that it was concerned with teaching expository writing from the point of view of pre-writing, those stages of the mind's activity during which the mind makes that act of conceptual discovery which enables the writer to treat his subject as an organized whole. The notion of pre-writing was explained and distinguished from writing and re-writing. Students were given a working definition of writing as "the domination of experience through the medium of language." They were told that before any subject can be "dominated" for the purposes of an essay, it was first of all necessary that the subject become, in some way, truly the writer's "experience"; that the subject be converted into the real categories of the person writing. We were primarily concerned at this point with laying the foundations of the attitude students behaving as writers ought to take toward themselves, and with setting them about the task of discovering their personal categories. To this end we used the following materials: 1) a quotation from William Butler Yeats on the relationship between conscious role-playing and personal discipline; 2) two essays from the works of Erich Fromm describing the psychological conditions of a creative attitude and the moral context in which the practice of any art flourishes; 3) a collection of texts from Thoreau examining the meaning of a creative attitude from different angles; 4) a series of leading questions designed to show students the kind of approach they should take to their journals; 5) a collection of texts from Thoreau on the art of the journal.[33]

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[33] For purposes of economical presentation, we have not incorporated into this chapter the totality of the material used in the course. These items may be found, reproduced either in their entirety or in part, in Appendix A, henceforth referred to as "A". Each separate item has been given a number according to which cross-reference is made.

1. The quotation from Yeats (see A, 1) enabled us to develop the following points: a) that writing was something that came from within, an "active virtue" of the person writing, rather than a "passive acceptance of a current code," a passive obedience to a set of rules of "correct" form; b) that students should stop thinking of themselves as merely students in a writing course, but instead should regard themselves in a "consciously dramatic" fashion, as engaged in the "wearing of a mask," in the playing of a role, the role of writers seeking to dominate their experience through the medium of language; c) that writing, as a kind of role-playing, requires discipline. We stressed this last point in order to make clear that the motivation students brought to the course had to include a willingness to focus their energies, without external constraint, upon the task of producing a good piece of writing. Even though we had told them that they were involved in an experimental course, we did not want them to believe that they therefore had the right to await passively our experimental manipulation of their psyches. We wanted them to be actively caught up in the challenge of our exploration of the pre-writing stages.

2. Fromm's essay on the practice of art (see A, 2) enabled us to build on the last point made in connection with the quotation from Yeats. Fromm's essay is a frank piece of moralizing which emphatically asserts that the practice of any art, including therefore the art of writing, makes four demands upon a person: discipline, concentration, patience, and supreme concern with mastery of the art. Fromm's essay was especially valuable because of the culturally relevant way in which he discusses these demands, and because he makes it obvious that one cannot achieve those "virtues" which aid the possibility of good writing unless one is willing to practice them in other areas of life as well. We hoped thereby to show students that the ability to write well was not simply a single talent for use in a writing class, but was, in a very deep sense, a function of one's total personality.

Fromm's essay, "The Creative Attitude," (see A, 3) helped us to show again how the act of creative response, central to the act of effective concept formation, was involved in the total personality of the writer. From this essay we derived a preliminary description of creative awareness: the ability to see and respond to the "suchness" of things without the obscuring intervention of customary labels or standardized conceptualization. Such a description of creative awareness enabled us to point out to students that before they could freshly come to terms with a subject, they had to make a positive effort to "see" their subject in all its real particularity, always trying to avoid the conventional response, the customary kinds of conceptualization so abundantly pre-fabricated by our society. This essay also enabled us to put our discussion of "originality" in a proper perspective: to be original, in writing or in anything else, means that "I experience myself as the true center of my world, as the true originator of my acts." In terms of effective concept formation, this version of the meaning of "originality" enabled us to show that good concepts come only from a "person," someone who is freely thinking _his_ thoughts, feeling _his_ feelings.

3. The texts from Thoreau's _Walden_ on the meaning of a creative attitude (see A, 4) provided us with a means of stressing and amplifying points already made in connection with the essays of Fromm. For example, we took text a. as another way of saying that discovery is always a "personal" act, involving, in Fromm's terms, a "sense of I." Text b. we used as a point of departure for an interesting discussion of Fromm's assertion that a genuinely creative person has both the "capacity to be puzzled" and a willingness to "let go of all certainties." Most of the texts, written in Thoreau's highly metaphorical, elusive and charged style, were very useful for provoking classroom discussion.

4. The only writing that students had to do during Unit I was a daily entry in their journal. We explained that a journal was not to be confused with a diary. Whereas a diary was simply a record of external happenings, a journal was an account of "internal happenings," of one's reflections upon the personal significance of the events of his day. We tried to convince students that in their journals they should write only for themselves; that even though their journals would be read from time to time by their instructor, they should try to write without any sense of a potential reader over their shoulder. In order to encourage spontaneity and honesty, students were told that whatever they wrote in their journals would be treated as privileged information. To give them a sense of the content of a journal entry, we provided a set of questions (see A, 5) designed to lead students toward the articulation of self-investigation and discovery--that kind of articulation which generally precedes effective concept formation.

5. To make students more reflective about their newly assumed role as journal-keepers, we used for classroom discussion a set of highly suggestive and provocative texts by Thoreau on the art of the journal; more specifically, on the art of articulate introspection (see A, 6). While it would be difficult to summarize here the subtlety of Thoreau's thinking on this subject, certainly text c. Thoreau's discussion of how the journal can be a vehicle of self-inspiration and how the scattered entries can suggest the conceptual wholeness of a potential essay, provided a valuable way of indicating how the journal assignment could significantly further the aims of an expository writing class. Text d., Thoreau's examination of the "doubleness" of the writer, of how the writer both thinks his thoughts and observes himself in the act of thinking those thoughts, was useful for an introduction and discussion of the notion of "distance," that ability any writer must have to step back from his

words and judge their effectiveness. While the in-class critique was the primary means in the course for developing critical distance in students, i was important, we felt, to introduce the concept at this point.

Unit II--The Escape from the Category: the Return to the Concrete

In Unit II we turned our concentrated attention to one of the most ser obstacles preventing effective concept formation, namely, the tendency on t part of writing students to prefer the abstract to the concrete, their app ent inability to use their physical senses as vehicles for the preparation genuine conceptual meaning, and their unwillingness to engage directly wit concrete stuff of their subject. Our emphasis here was suggested by the d cipline of the religious meditation in which the participant begins his pe sonal encounter with religious doctrine by finding some way of relating th doctrine to his image-making power and to his senses. (For a more extensi treatment of the theory of the "composition of place," see Chapter II.) W assumed for our motto at this point the scholastic maxim that *nihil est in intellectu quod non prius in sensu*; or, in our terms, that the only effect act of conceptualization for writing is one which takes into true account particulars of a subject, especially those sensory particulars where meani begins and which the concept serves to organize. We were also aware that dents, for a variety of reasons, tend to neglect these sources of genuine meaning when it comes to the task of putting words on a page; that they te almost invariably to prefer the infamous generality of undergraduate prose We knew that to succeed in our hope of giving them some experience in the of forming genuine concepts for essays, we had first of all to dissuade th from this preference, and then direct them into the habit of stating them concretely. Moreover, we felt that only if we could dispose them toward habitual tendency to make a concrete approach to any subject, could we thu make it more possible for them to become thoroughly involved as persons, feeling and aware with their five senses, with their subjects. To serve these ends we used a great variety of materials: 1) an excerpt from Joseph Conrad's preface to his Nigger of the Narcissus; 2) a long selection from a standard rhetoric on concrete language; 3) a series of carefully phrased questions designed to encourage precise seeing and hearing; 4) an essay by Malcolm Cowley, "Sociological Habit Patterns in Linguistic Transmogrification"; 5) two texts by E. B. White and Ernest Hemingway; 6) a special exercise designed by us and entitled "The Existential Sentences."

1. The Conrad selection (see A, 7) was as valuable for its rhetoric as for its content. Our purpose at this point was not only to convince students of the necessity of both thinking and writing concretely but also to persuade them into such action. Conrad's impassioned declaration of the writer's task--"to make you see"--seemed highly suited to this purpose. In this context we were also able to introduce students to one of our working classroom directives, what we called the "principle of showing, not telling"; that is, a writer in order to engage a reader has to illustrate his remote generalities; and, from the more important point of view of pre-writing, a writer in order to engage himself effectively with a subject has to find some way of making it real along his five senses (showing), and not simply grope his way toward and around it through the prefabricated fog of second-hand abstractions (telling).

2. We used a long selection from a standard rhetoric (Birk and Birk, Understanding and Using English) on the subject of concrete expressions (see A, 8). We wished to make perfectly clear, with copious illustrations, the distinction between abstract and concrete language, and the various rhetorical means a writer has of making his language more concrete. Throughout this presentation of traditional material, however, we continued stressing

the context of pre-writing and the fact that no amount of verbal manipulation could serve as a substitute for an inner willingness always to seek out the sensory details of a subject.

3. After this thorough discussion of concrete language, we then asked students to write a one-page description of a campus scene. We explained that they had to make a special effort to avoid the usual pictorial clichés of the college campus: their task was not to describe what could be seen in the kind of picture printed in the average college catalogue, but to see freshly, precisely, originally (in Fromm's sense of the term). To help them in this task, we gave them two specially prepared lists of questions, one entitled "The Sense of Sight," the other "The Sense of Hearing" (see A, 9). The questions, we felt, were valuable for two reasons: 1) the orderly way they directed the observer to a detailed enumeration of the sensory particulars of a scene, 2) the specific way in which they directed the observer to arrange his particularized observations into some common impression. We hoped by this dual strategy both to force students to attend to concrete specifics and to begin training them in the act of sorting particulars into meaningful, conceptual wholes--wholes which have been "earned," not borrowed.

4. One of the most common reasons why college students do not write direct, concrete English is the fact that they, in the course of their studies, too readily become addicted to the verbal mannerisms (jargon, tautological abstractions, needlessly impersonal phrasing, etc.) of the social sciences. Malcolm Cowley's corrective satire on the linguistic habits of the sociologists (see A, 10) was useful in showing the absurdity of such mannerisms, and in persuading students to be on guard against them. We tried to show how an overfondness for jargon, for hasty and pompous labels for simple things, can interfere with the mind's attempt to engage directly and honestly with a subject,

and thus prevent the possibility of the writer's discovery of his own conceptualization for an essay.

5. The text from Hemingway, perhaps the most famous single passage from his A Farewell to Arms (see A, 11), was used to show the cultural dangers of a heedless reliance on abstractions: how soldiers, standing in the rain and misery of a World War I battlefield, can discover no meaning in the "shouted" abstractions of wartime propaganda; how words can become tragically divorced from the realities of life. E. B. White's short statement on "The Meaning of Democracy" (see A, 11) illustrated the professional writer's ability to take a term, so broad in its meaning as to be almost meaningless, and endow it with cogent suggestiveness by embodying it in a series of provocative concrete events.

6. Building immediately upon the White selection, we introduced students to the exercise of "The Existential Sentence" (see A, 12). As we told our students in the introduction to this exercise: "The beginning writer must learn now to break out of the sterile shell of his abstrations, how to rediscover the living, concrete world of sensible experience pressing in about him. Only if he can make himself habitually open to this real world, can he or anyone else (a reader, e.g.) be certain that all the writer's finely spun syllables have any genuine relationship to the great out-there--that world of flesh and blood, of rough stone and smooth sky--that world from which all good writing ultimately derives, and to which all good writing (and thinking) intimately returns.

"The existential sentence is an abrupt way of accomplishing this necessary task. In such a sentence, an abstraction (e.g., 'happiness') is yoked by a form of the verb to be (e.g., 'is') to a vivid concrete embodiment (e.g., 'warm puppy') of the concept the abstraction names. The general idea thus passes into the precise image. The vague concept is illuminated within the specific clarity of a sensible thing or event in the real world. The universe of abstractions is domesticated."

We asked students to write five sentences for ten abstractions from the list at the end of the exercise. We hoped thereby to develop in them the tendency to fix in some clear image their general terms for things. And by way of summing up the entire unit, we told them that the existential sentence was a paradigm of the first step in the process of meaningful discovery--the escape from the category and the return to the concrete.

Unit III--The Escape from Alien Masks: Thought-Clichés

In Unit III we introduced our students to the problem of conceptualization as such, although we did not explicitly use that term. Instead, we spoke of such things as the "angle of vision" or the "perspective" which a writer must take toward his subject. The problem of discovering one's perspective (i.e., one's structuring concept) was announced as the central problem of pre-writing, to which, in one way or another, the rest of the course would be devoted. We first approached the question in a negative way: just as in Unit II we had been concerned with the fact that too many writing students never really see their subject because of their too hasty and too uncritical acceptance of prefabricated labels for things (what we called "abstractions"), so in Unit III we were concerned with the fact that many writing students, even though they may have made a sincere effort to engage with the particulars of their subject, never really succeed in the task of combining these particulars into significant or personally relevant wholes because they too easily accept the ready-made combinations offered by our culture. Just as a writer must see for himself, so a writer must combine for himself. Our strategy in Unit III was to begin to train students in the necessary writer's task of making every possible effort to avoid someone else's structure for events, someone else's combination or conceptualization, someone else's version of experience. We referred to these things as "alien masks"--seeing the world through the eyes of someone else--or as "thought-clichés"--seeing the world through the lens of a culturally available platitude. We distinguished between the verbal cliché and the thought-cliché, and pointed to the latter as far more insidious because far more difficult to detect. To aid our students in the labor of escaping "alien masks," we introduced them to the principle of re-structuring, a method of deliberately avoiding the commonplace combination so immediately available, and of forcing the subject to be seen--i.e., structured--through an unusual angle of vision. Our materials in this Unit were the following: 1) texts by Søren Kierkegaard and Alfred Kazin; 2) an excerpt from Edmond Rostand's Cyrano de Bergerac entitled by us "Exfoliation of As-Ifs"; 3) a paradigm entitled "New Ways of Looking"; 4) an exercise based on the existential sentence and the problem of point of view.

1. The text from Kierkegaard's Journals seemed a fitting way of introducing this unit (see A, 13). The earnest writer must never be like one of Kierkegaard's "schoolboys," that is, a writer who "cheats" by finding his solution to the problem of discovering what perspective he will take toward his subject matter by "copying" the answering concept out of somone else's thinking. He must work out the sum for himself, that is, perform his own act of conceptualization. The quotations from Kazin (see A, 13) were made to serve this same idea: the true writer must refuse easy answers to the question of "what the times are like," of what meaning-giving structure he ought to give to the "events" of his subject. He must make his own "bargain with reality," must convert the "reality" of his material into his own terms, must fix it in his own perspective. As a consequence, he must also be willing to search out

and experience a "manifest feeling of strangeness" before his subject. Only then, when he has examined his subject matter to the point where it does "actually outrun all the names" or concepts he can easily give to it, is he ready for his own, personally relevant act of conceptualization. Only then can he sort particulars into a category which constitutes a "new reality of mind" where he "can live." Students were reminded of Fromm's observation that a genuinely creative attitude is one which contains a willingness to "let go of all certainties."

2. In introducing the question of perspective, we reverted briefly to the text of E. B. White on "The Meaning of Democracy" (see A, 11). We showed how White tries to see through to the meaning of democracy, not through a combination of abstractions which a political scientist might devise, but through a set of relatively concrete things, each one of which functions as a perspective allowing a provocative insight into those fluid realities of a democratic society that always tend to evade the rigidity of abstract categories. White, a professional essayist rather than a political scientist, discovers his own angle of vision on a difficult subject. In addition, his choosing of a set of concrete perspectives opens up a whole new range of surprising meanings--meanings which simply would not have been available if he had approached the subject in customary text-book fashion. We inferred from this analysis that a writer should make a conscious effort: 1) to avoid a perspective which at first seems to be the obvious one, 2) to find a perspective to which one can personally respond, 3) to consider the possibilities of the concrete perspective as a way of catalyzing new discoveries.

We introduced our students to the principle of re-structuring by an analysis of Cyrano's famous speech on his nose (see A, 14). This elongated subject is submitted to a series of rapid metaphoric transformations (as-ifs) by the willful imposition of a series of hypothetical attitudes toward the nose, each one of which invokes a different metaphor. Of course the question of perspective is in this text primarily a question of the attitude one takes toward a subject, not one of formal conceptualization as such. But the speech, in its rhetorical brilliance, well illustrates how a subject is seen (or structured) not so much by what it is in itself but by what it appears to be from a given angle of vision; and how, as one shifts the angle of vision, the subject is seen differently (or re-structured).

3. To give our students experience in the act of re-structuring, and to force them into looking at a subject through an unusual angle of vision, we had them do an exercise which we called "New Ways of Looking" (see A, 15). In this exercise students were asked to write short essays about one activity in terms of another activity Thus, for example, a student could write about "dreaming" in terms of "sailing," or about "studying" in terms of "fencing." Students were encouraged to select their subject and perspectives at random, to push the application as far and as hard as it might go, and not to be afraid of being "unusual." We discussed with our students the necessity of "playing" in this stage of pre-writing, of being willing to confront the usual with the apparently far-fetched, of developing a conscious toleration of seeming irrelevance. We also led the class in a discussion and exploration of the conceptual possibilities suggested by various juxtapositions of activities. Students then had to write three short essays: in the first they had to write about one activity from column B in terms of one activity from column A; in the second they did the same but with different activities from both columns; in the third they had to take the same activity from column B they had chosen for the second essay and discuss it in terms of an activity from column A different from the activity from column A used in the second essay. We hoped

by this variation in the exercise to give our students a deeper sense of the possibilities of re-structuring, and to allow them to discover for themselves what happens in their writing when they deliberately alter their angle of vision toward a subject.

4. To give our students further exercise in the principle of re-structuring, we combined the question of point of view with the problem of the existential sentence (see A, 16). In this exercise the specific illustration of the abstraction is determined not merely by the abstraction itself but also by the point of view from which a writer chooses to "existentialize" it. Thus from the point of view of a father: "Humility is thanking God that all the children take after their mother." We considered this exercise to be a succinct paradigm of a number of important acts in the pre-writing stages: 1) the discovery of a specific illustration for an abstraction, 2) the determining of the content of this act of specifying discovery by the imposition of a perspective. Students had to write existential sentences for a series of abstractions, each one of which was to be considered several times from the different points of view designated in the exercise.

Unit IV--The Point of Urgency: the Seed-Idea

Unit IV was devoted to an amplification of many of the points already made, and to an attempt to focus these points upon the task of producing a formal essay, the first one which students had to write in the course. In our continuing discussion of the principle of re-structuring, we dealt with this question: which of the many perspectives a writer can discover should he use for the production of an essay? This question led us to our notion of the "point of urgency"--that point in the pre-writing stages where a subject is suddenly seen through a personally compelling perspective, where in the light of such a perspective a writer finds himself wanting to say things about his subject, and where, as his inner motivation grows, it becomes crucially important for him not to be misunderstood. The "point of urgency," then, is a term used to designate the writer's inner awareness of a dynamic relationship to his subject. From a more external point of view, the "point of urgency" occurs when a writer has discovered his "seed-idea"--that fusion of subject and perspective which seems to make the essay "go," that single idea which calls forth other ideas and seems to promise a way of organizing the essay into a coherent whole. In connection with the notion of the "seed-idea," we introduced our students to the question of organic form in an essay, of how an essay ought to be thought of as growing into an organized whole from the dynamic encounter of the writer's mind with his seed-idea. Then, to give our students practice in the discovery of a seed-idea and the carrying of it out into a whole essay, we had them write a formal meditation. The following materials were used: 1) texts by W. D. Snodgrass, G. M Hopkins, Kierkegaard; 2) notes on the organic theory of composition taken from Meyer Abrams' Mirror and the Lamp and entitled by us "The Archetype of the Plant"; c) Francis Bacon's essay "Of Studies"; 4) John Donne's "Devotion XVII" from his Devotions upon Emergent Occasions.

1. The text by Snodgrass (see A, 17) enabled us to develop a tentative answer to the question of which of many possible perspectives a writer ought to use. As, according to Snodgrass, "the only reality which a man can ever surely know is that self he cannot help being," so, we argued, the only perspective which a writer ought to choose is one which intimately corresponds to his own sense of the way things are; and this sense can be discovered only through introspection, a disciplined and sustained engagement with the reality of oneself confronting a subject. The essential badness of conceptualization begins in the writer's giving in to "the voice of any borrowed authority";

the goodness of conceptualization begins when a writer can give an affirmative answer to the question, "Am I writing what I really think?" The writer's search for his concept is, in its origins, a search of self. We amplified these points by a consideration of texts from G. M. Hopkins and Kierkegaard (see A, 17). Hopkins gave us the phrases "rehearsal of self" and "taste of self" which we used to characterize that act of self-recognition which, in a sense, must occur in the act of forming an effective concept for an essay. Kierkegaard, though writing about man's larger moral concerns, did provide us with some useful phrases: the true "seed-idea" for any good writer is "no longer outside him" but one where, in a special way, "he lives"; such an idea is always a "truth which is true" for the "me" of the writer. On the basis of this discussion, students were urged always to regard a spontaneous act of personal assent to the value of their ideas as the surest sign that they were on the right track toward finding their organizing angle of vision.

2. "The Archetype of the Plant" (see A, 18), summarized from Abrams' discussion of the organic theory of composition in his Mirror and the Lamp, provided us with a theoretical paradigm useful for a discussion of how a "seed-idea" can "grow" into a whole essay. We tried to convince our students that the most pragmatically valuable way of thinking about their activity of writing an essay is to regard this essay as a developing plant, growing from within themselves, from their sense of urgency about a subject. The essay is not to be seen in external fashion: as an aggregate of materials, as an outline of general topics somehow filled out with illustrating detail. Instead, the essay should be seen as an expression of the mind's act of consequential thinking. The "seed-idea" is that idea which has sufficient potency to beget other ideas, each idea then having the power to develop inevitably (and not necessarily logically) into additional ideas, some of which may have

the power, like a plant, of assimilating to their "own substance alien and diverse elements," of revealing surprising areas of statement that can be included in the total organism of the essay. Moreover, and most importantly, the "achieved structure" of the essay is to be regarded as an "organic unity": the whole of the essay, though owing "its being to the co-existence of parts," is still "prior and primary." No single idea in such an essay is sufficient for meaning in itself; each both contributes to, and is dependent upon, the total meaning the essay is striving to establish in words. The student, therefore, should never regard the mere accumulation of words into sentences, of sentences into paragraphs, as the way in which an essay is written. He must, first of all, discover that single compelling insight, that "seed-idea," that organizing concept which will then "grow into" language, be realized in the extended sentences and paragraphs of a developing essay. Good statement for an essay is not discovered in a dictionary, a thesaurus, a source-book; good statement comes only from the mind's actualization of its urgent content into words on a page.

3. We then analyzed Bacon's "Of Studies" (see A, 19) as an illustration of an organically developed essay. While there was obviously no way of recovering the particular psychological "events" which went into the production of this work, it did seem possible to analyze the statements and progression of the realized essay from the point of view of organic form. We showed our students that while Bacon's subject is "studies," his perspective upon it, that angle of vision which compells his subject into development, is the question of the use of studies. From this "seed-idea," this fusion of subject and perspective in the opening two words of the essay ("Studies serve"), everything else in the essay follows; everything else is subservient to the growth in meaning of this opening statement. This was illustrated through an elaborate diagram. We also told our students that, according to what we know of Bacon's

life and his other writings, he was intensely concerned with the practical application of theoretical speculations, and especially with the question of how man might exert his power, gained from knowledge, upon his environment. This personally urgent concern, we suggested, colored his entire treatment of his subject; and was perhaps the general matrix out of which came the particular "point of urgency" behind this essay.

4. Our students were then directed into the discipline of the meditation as a way both of finding for themselves a "seed-idea" and of possibly producing an organically coherent essay. As an introduction to this discipline, we analyzed Donne's "Devotion XVII" (see A, 20) from his Devotions upon Emergent Occasions. We first showed how Donne effects his composition of place: he is lying ill in bed and he hears the tolling of a funeral bell. This "place" is converted into a situation charged with rhetorical energy by the question Donne raises: for whom does this bell toll? And this question, in turn, leads Donne into a consideration of the problems of the meaning of death, suffering, salvation, the church, and the relation among men in the church. Throughout his treatment of these problems, Donne implicitly reverts to a description of the nature of the church derived from St. Paul: that the church is the "mystical body" of Christ, and all men who belong to the church are "members" of this "body." From this essential visualization of the church's nature, Donne draws parallel analogies ("No man is an island...every man is a piece of the continent," etc.); and he also extracts the answer to his opening question: as all men share in a common identity as members of the "universal" church, so any funeral bell, no matter for whom it may specifically be tolling, tolls for all men. We characterized this meditation as beginning in a dramatic situation, as then posing a personal question about the meaning of this situation, and as exploring answers to this question by the use of structuring analogies derived from theological premises. The meditation begins in

a composition of place, proceeds through analysis, and concludes with Donne's personal resolution of "making my recourse to my God, who is our only security."

Students were directed to write a 500 word meditation on the subject of "Loneliness." They were told to resist the immediate temptation, succumbed to by so many undergraduate writers, to begin with a conceptual analysis of the subject. Instead, they were directed to begin their approach by asking personally relevant questions: "How is it when I am lonely?" "What do I see, hear, taste when I am lonely?" "What situation stands out in my memory as the loneliest of my life?" "What physical sensations did I have at that time?" In short, they were directed to use their memories in a construction of a dramatic scene embodying their experience, not their concept, of loneliness. After this composition of place, they were told to apply their understanding in an attempt to analyze the meaning of this experience. Again they were warned against permitting themselves the luxury of any too hasty or prefabricated explanations. They were urged to regard it as probable that their loneliness is ultimately inexplicable and that, as a consequence, any analysis they might offer should be phrased in tentative terms. They were directed to ask leading, not concluding, questions of themselves: "What were some of the causes of the loneliness which I experienced?" "How is it that at some times I can be alone and not really lonely, and at this time I was lonely, even though (perhaps) a member of a group?" "Was this loneliness anything like the loneliness I have read about in novels, or saw in motion pictures?" We also suggested that the students, following the model of Donne, take some concrete thing from the composed scene and use it as a point of reference around which to organize their analysis, or even as a structuring image whereby they might visualize the pattern of their more abstract analysis. (Thus one student used the room in which she was lonely as an image of the way she had shut off her thoughts and feelings from an active concern with others.

See A, 21.) Finally, students were told to make an act of the will, to form some resolution concerning their behavior, this resolution to be based upon what they had discovered about themselves in their analysis. To sum up: their essay was to follow the general psychological progression revealed in the Donne meditation: 1) the evocation of a concrete and dramatic situation; 2) the asking of personal questions directly pertinent to the meaning of the evoked scene; 3) the formation of tentative answers to these questions, and the possible use of ingredients of the scene to structure these answers; 4) the making of a personal resolution as a way of concluding the meditation. We hoped by this method to insure that the perspective which a student might finally take upon the subject of loneliness would be genuinely _his_ perspective, genuinely involved in a personal "point of urgency." We also hoped that this method might provoke a student into writing what we have described as an organically developing essay.

Unit V--The Principle of As-If and the Concrete Analogy

In Unit V we introduced our students to the technique of using a single concrete analogy as the organizing perspective of a whole essay. Our emphasis here was on what we consider to be the most crucial stage in pre-writing: the bisociation of two apparently different areas of discourse, the treatment of a subject _as if_ it were something else, and the consequent imposition of a pattern derived from this something else upon the subject. We explained that the central question in writing an essay is the question of form, of finding some way of relating the various parts of a subject into a coherent whole. We then showed how the concrete analogy could serve as an answer to this question, how the elements of a subject could be welded together through the use of a structuring perspective transferred from the relational pattern inherent in the analogy. Our strategy at this point was merely to introduce our students to the technique; because of its difficulty, we did not expect them to achieve an immediate competence. After an initial explanation of what an analogy was, we led them through various exercises whereby they might discover for themselves the heuristic potentials of such a technique. Then we tried to show how the concrete analogy, when properly employed, was one of the most valuable approaches a writer could use to solve many of the prewriting problems already discussed in the course. Finally, we had them write a 500 word essay using a concrete analogy as their informing perspective. Our materials in this unit were: 1) a short text on the principle of as-if from an essay by Dorothy Sayers; 2) a series of quotations illustrating analogical discourse taken from Upton and Samson's Creative Analysis; 3) a paradigm which we called the "Paradigm of Compose and Refer"; 4) a summary statement on the question of perspective entitled "Seven Characteristics of a Good Perspective."

1. The Sayers text (see A, 22) provided us with an emphatic summary statement of what we have called the "principle of as-if." The act of discovery, that act of conceptualization which brings an essay into focus, is essentially involved in the "perception of likenesses, the relating of like things to form a new unity, and the words 'as if'." We argued that the search for a perspective involves a necessary degree of oblique vision: that a writer should learn how to "come sideways" at his subject; to regard it in the prewriting stages as if it were something else, and to choose as his "something else" an area whose structure is already clear to him. The unknown, then, can become assimilated into, and illuminated by, the form of the known.

2. We immediately illustrated these ideas by an analysis of a series of analogical quotations (see A, 23). Our strategy here was to make students understand the following: 1) The act of analogy can be defined as the perception of a relation between two sets of relationships. Thus, as A is to B, so C is to D; or, in the sentence "The Lord is my shepherd," as a shepherd is to

his flock, so the Lord is to men. 2) The analogy, as a vehicle of discourse, is not to be dismissed as mere rhetorical ornamentation, but should be regarded as involved in every sudden awareness of identity or pattern where none had been thought possible before. Thus Newton, so the story goes, discovered the relationship between the sun and the planets by thinking about this problem in terms derived from the encounter between his head and the legendary apple. 3) The analogy can provide, for the purposes of an essay, not only a sense of how thoughts may be structured, but also a vocabulary whereby to get these thoughts stated. This was dramatized to students by having them attempt--after the various relations of the analogical quotations had been worked out--to state the author's thought without any use of words from the analogical perspective. 4) The vocabulary of the concrete analogy, as well as establishing a way of stating relationship, frequently opens up whole new areas of possible statement. Thus, while a theologian might be able to sum up in a succinct abstract formula the relationship between God and men, the psalmist's observation that the Lord is his shepherd involves the whole question of God's providence in the highly particular and highly sensuous world of the shepherd--a world which is likely to have far more semantic resonance in the mind of either the writer or the reader than the formula of the theologian. 5) The concrete analogy facilitates the possibility of a personal response through its substitution of the categories of temporal or spatial relation for the categories of logical relation: only intellects live in the world of logical categories; persons, feeling and aware with their five senses, live in the world of time and space.

3. Students were directed to write a 500 word essay on the subject of "Mind," and to use a concrete analogy to organize and develop their essay. As a way of testing the structural possibilities of a given analogical perspective,

we told students to follow the method outlined in the Paradigm of Compose and Refer. First of all, they were to compose the concrete world of the analogy they had chosen for testing. The method of doing this was similar to the method of composing the place in the meditation: students were to imagine the specific concrete details suggested by their perspective. Thus, if they had chosen the "ocean" as a possible analogy for the subject of "Mind," they were to summon up such images as waves rippling against a shore, currents sweeping through a bay, strange scaly creatures taken from the ocean's depths, sailboats bending before the wind, etc. These were to be briefly listed under the heading "World of Perspective" on one side of a page. Then, as in the second step of the meditation, students were to ask questions about the meaning of the evoked scene, so in this testing of a perspective students were to refer their list of specific details to the subject, asking questions about possible resemblances: "How is a wave like anything in the mind?" "What are the currents of the mind?" "Are strange creatures from the ocean's depths like some ideas that suddenly come into consciousness?" Whatever resemblances the student might discover were to be listed on the other side of the page under the heading "World of Subject." While exploring this exercise, students were also to keep a list of what we fancifully termed "metaverbalizings"; that is, phrases which mingled words from the world of the subject with words from the world of the perspective. (They had already had some experience in forming such phrases in the exercise "New Ways of Looking" of Unit III. See A, 15.) A somewhat abbreviated version of this exercise might look like the following:

World of Perspective: Ocean	World of Subject: Mind
1. waves rippling	1. thoughts, ideas passing over the surface of consciousness
2. currents, brief currents in a bay, great ocean currents like the Gulf Stream, sparkling currents under sunlight	2. emotions, passing emotions, anger, guilt, joy, etc., permanent emotions, ambition, love sparkling feelings of laughter
3. unsounded depths, sunken treasure	3. the hidden potential of a man's untested virtue, creative imagination waiting to be provoked
4. mysterious, murky depths squirming with strange creatures	4. the suppressed destructive emotions revealed by modern psychology, anger, lust, jealousy, the bathosphere of the analyst's couch
5. deep-sea fishing	5. deep thinking: struggling for self-understanding; struggling to capture an idea, smelly ideas

Possible subject with perspective: Trying to understand one's mind is like fishing in a mysterious, unpredictable, sometimes frightening, sometimes placid ocean.

Metaverbalizings: the ripple of an idea, the rising tide of ambition, the underwater light of dreaming, the treacherous reefs of unacknowledged guilt, etc.

Students were advised to use the Paradigm of Compose and Refer as a way of provoking their own insights, of discovering a structuring "seed-idea" (or fusion of subject with organizing perspective) which they then could expand into an entire essay. They were warned against two dangers: 1) using the lists composed in the exercise as an outline of their essay, that is, allowing their essay to be a mere report of their accumulation of analogical resemblances; 2) elaborating their analogy in such detail that it might become unclear in the finished essay which was the subject and which the perspective, or whether the essay was genuinely concerned with "Mind" or with nothing more than the making of "witty" connections. The analogy was to be used simply as a perspective, as a vehicle for helping the subject to "go." The perspective was not to become an opaque lens; the vehicle was not to ride the subject.

4. By way of summarizing the entire course as it had developed up to this point, we explained to our students what we called the "seven characteristics" of a good perspective. In our hypothetical terms, of course, we were discussing the characteristics of an effective act of conceptualization for an essay. The good perspective, according our classroom presentation: 1) does not prevent the writer from "seeing" the subject as it is, neither riddled with thought-clichés nor trapped in the vagueness of unrealized abstractions; 2) is not divorced from a personal sense of what is real, what is compelling; the writer has drawn his perspective from some "urgent" part of his experience, and thus has the desire to speak about the subject in his special way; 3) enables the writer to proceed into the relatively unknown (the subject) from the point of view of the relatively known (the "existential" perspective--in our applications of this notion, the composed scene of the meditation and the concrete analogy); 4) tends to shape the static "given" of a subject into a dynamic problem which demands its special solution (the "puzzle form" of the meditation and the concrete analogy); 5) tends to generate new insight into a subject; the unsuspected possibilities of a subject stand revealed; 6) suggests ways of structuring the writer's thinking about his subject; the subject, already centrifugal, now becomes centripetal, tending toward definition and organization; the essay begins to "grow" organically, like a plant, seeking both the expansion of the whole, and the definition of the whole and its parts; 7) fulfills the demands of decorum; the perspective is suitable from the point of view of the writer's intention, the subject matter, and the audience addressed. This final characteristic, as we pointed out to our students, is more properly the concern of rhetoric as usually conceived and taught, not the concern of a course devoted to teaching the stages of pre-writing.

Unit VI--Finding and Refining the Perspective

Unit VI was devoted primarily to the task of giving our students further practice in the use of a concrete analogy as the perspective for an essay. Even though our course was concerned with training students in the pre-writing stages, we had to take some time to insure that good pre-writing was not obscured in the final essay by simple ineptitude in writing, by those relatively commonplace errors in the use of language which sometimes prevent a good thought from ever becoming actualized in words on a page. Thus much of the time of this last unit was spent in classroom critiques where the students' papers were discussed in great detail, and where various problems of expression, especially those caused by the use of the technique of the analogy, were treated. The only material of theoretical novelty introduced at this point was related to a refinement of the question of finding a perspective: we tried to convince students that they must learn to trust their feelings in the pre-writing stages; and, even more importantly, that they could use these feelings in a paradigmatic way for the discovery of a possible analogy which then could be tested by the technique of compose and refer. We also showed students a number of finished essays, taken from various sources, and illustrating both how analogical statement could be phrased and how an analogical point of view can exert either explicit or implicit control over the structure of an essay. In this unit students had to write two 500 word essays, one on the subject of "The Future," the other on the subject of "Coming of Age." The following materials were used: 1) a long excerpt from William Gordon's Synectics on "The Hedonic Response"; 2) a paradigm entitled by us "The Search for an Analogy; 3) an essay written by us and called "Strategy and Tactics in Writing," and an editorial from the New York Times entitled "Overheating the Economy".

1. The selection by William Gordon entitled "The Hedonic Response" (see A, 24) enabled us to conduct a useful classroom discussion of the way a writer

ought both to trust and use his emotions as they are evoked during the prewriting stages. We suggested that too many students, either in their haste to complete an assignment or in their desire to speak in "the voice of any borrowed authority" (see A, 17), simply do not permit their own feelings about a subject to emerge. But they must permit this if they are to become persons fully involved in the solution of a particular writing problem. Especially must they be willing to follow what Gordon calls the "hedonic response"--the pleasurable sensation that one is going in the right direction toward the solution of a problem, even though one has at the time no certainty of the final outcome. The "hedonic response," we argued, is frequently the first sign that a "point of urgency" has been reached, and that a "seed-idea" is present and waiting to be articulated. In purely practical terms, we advised our students, whenever they honestly and pleasurably felt they were close to the "solution" of their essay, to write out a rough draft as rapidly as possible. This then could be gone over in leisure and "tested" according to the various criteria we have already established.

2. We then explained to our students how their own emotions could be explored in the search for concrete analogies which might be useful in the construction of their essays. We suggested that they not approach the problem in a purely rational way, but that they make a deliberate effort to use their emotions, and to begin their search for an analogy by making a list of their genuine feelings toward a subject. For, as we argued, it is in the affective mode where analogies are likely to suggest themselves. A concrete analogy, once grasped through the similarity of its affective qualities to the affective qualities of the subject, can suggest more formal structural possibilities. After having discovered a workable analogy, the writer, if he so desires, ought not to find it too difficult to suppress mention of those purely affective qualities which originally led him to that perspective. Moreover, even

if the writer intends this kind of dispassionate analysis of his subject, that search for a perspective which begins with an affective response is far more likely to discover a genuinely workable analogy. The search for an analogy might be described as an attempt to find a way of converting something which is abstract and vague in its outlines (the subject) into something which is concrete and therefore precise (the analogy). But since affective responses are most clearly wedded to the concrete world, it is not too difficult to discover for any specific affective response a corresponding concrete object, situation, or event. Thus an abstract subject may be clarified in the direction of the concrete by examining the subject in terms of its affective qualities. The affective realm might be looked at as that region where the concrete and the abstract tend to converge; and it is there, consequently, where concrete analogies are most likely to be discovered. The completed paradigm of "The Search for an Analogy" might look like the following:

Subject: Studying

Affective response: 1. Study is illuminating.
2. Study is exhausting.
3. Study is refreshing.

Suggested Analogies:

1. Illuminating: lighting a candle, building a fire.
2. Exhausting: climbing a mountain, swimming across a lake, cleaning a house.
3. Refreshing: drinking a glass of water, emerging from a stuffy room into the cool night air.

3. As we indicated above, most of the final unit was devoted to giving our students practical experience in the task of using a single concrete analogy as the structuring perspective of an essay. They had to write two 500 word essays using such an analogy: one on "The Future," the other on "Coming of Age." Much time was spent in class and in personal conference discussing the

various problems they encountered in their drafts. To give them a sense of how an analogy "works" in a finished essay, we analyzed two models: one written by us and entitled "Strategy and Tactics in Writing," the other an editorial from The New York Times entitled "Overheating the Economy."

"Strategy and Tactics in Writing" (see A, 25) was useful, we felt, not only for its content but especially for its very explicit illustration of the use of an analogy both for the conception of an idea and for its articulation. "Overheating the Economy" (see A, 26) presented a more subtle use of an analogy. To have students discover this for themselves, we had them go through the editorial, underlining all words or phrases taken from the world of engines, motors, rockets, etc. Gradually there emerged this fact: that throughout the editorial the national economy is being compared to a great engine, and that the editorial writers are using this somewhat suppressed analogy to structure their argument and, in a few instances, to articulate it.

We concluded the course by pointing out that the concrete analogy is certainly not the only technique which can be employed in writing expository essays; that, however, it seemed to us the most useful way of testing in a course our experimental version of pre-writing, a technique embodying in vivid fashion most of the central problems surrounding the act of conceptualization; and that finally, no matter what technique may be used in an essay, the crucial difficulty remains that of finding and exploiting what we have described as the "good" perspective.

Summary of Paradigms

What follows is a list of all the paradigms used in this course to help students through the various stages of pre-writing and toward an effective act of conceptualization for an essay. Some are reproduced in Appendix A. Others, where we felt it advisable, are described and illustrated in the text of this chapter. References follow each listing:

1. Questions on "The Sense of Sight" and "The Sense of Hearing." See A, 9.
2. The Existential Sentence. See A, 12.
3. New Ways of Looking. See A, 15.
4. The Existential Sentence and Point of View. See A, 16.
5. Procedure of Meditation. See pp. 59-61.
6. Paradigm of Compose and Refer. See pp. 63-65.
7. The Search for an Analogy. See pp. 68-69.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

Introduction

Because of the complexity of the procedures and aims of the experimental course, we felt that no single method of assessing its results would give an accurate account of its success or failure. Consequently, in evaluating the results of the course, we used a variety of approaches, each designed to explore certain questions which we wanted asked, and to discover, whenever possible, specific answers.

As a preliminary to this process of evaluation, and in order to establish a necessary framework for the making of comparisons, all sections of English 213 which were not taught by experimental methods, were designated as control sections by the department. There were three experimental sections taught in both the Winter and the Spring terms of 1964. The number of control sections varied according to the size of the total 213 enrollment. In Winter of 1964 there were eleven such control sections; in Spring of 1964 there were ten; in Summer of 1964 there were four. In the Fall of 1963 three "pilot" experimental sections were taught. Our aim in these sections was primarily to organize and specify our hypotheses, and to attempt to translate them into teachable form. The experimental course which finally emerged from this pilot program is described in Chapter III, and was taught in Winter and Spring terms of 1964.

Four basic methods of evaluating the course were used: 1) To discover whether students' attitudes toward writing and toward themselves as writers had been significantly affected, we had them write critiques of the course. These critiques were analyzed and then compared with a sampling of student critiques from the control sections. 2) To discover whether the instructors of the experimental sections felt that the new course was in any way superior to the methods of teaching composition they had used in the past, we had them submit a statement of their subjective impressions. 3) To determine whether a course emphasizing pre-writing could lead to the production of measurably better essays, we had a sampling of essays from both the experimental sections and the control sections graded by a group of outside readers. The results were then submitted to a statistical analysis. 4) To determine more exactly the differences between the experimental and the control essays--those differences which, we felt, could not be articulated in the language of statistics--we had a group of outside readers read a sampling of both groups and submit their subjective impressions. The rest of this chapter, therefore, will be divided into four principal sections, each reporting in turn on the results of one of these four methods of evaluation: Student Evaluation; Instructor Evaluation; Objective Evaluation by Outside Readers; Subjective Evaluation by Outside Readers.

Student Evaluation

To discover the reaction to the course by students enrolled in the experimental sections, we asked each of them in Winter and Spring terms to submit a written critique of the course. Since a ten week course does not provide sufficient time to effect a radical improvement in the writing of most students, we had to find some way other than an examination of their essays to determine the specific value of our experimental course. The written testimony of our students seemed to provide one way.

That their essays improved over the term seems to be the case (see section below entitled "Objective Evaluation by Outside Readers"). But since an improvement is frequently observed in any well-run, traditionally-taught composition course, it gives no accurate way of determining whether the experimental course accomplished what it set out to accomplish. What we were looking for primarily was evidence that our students showed, not merely some signs of improvement, but an awareness of those special skills of pre-writing and those attitudes and habits of mind which we are convinced provide a potential for continued writing improvement, and which our experiment was designed to teach.

Each critique was to be about 500 words in length. Since we did not wish in any way to influence the testimony of our students, the question we asked them to deal with was this: "What did you like or dislike about Project English?" We felt that any further specification in the assignment of the critique would tend to reflect our own pre-conceptions of what we wanted them to react to, and thus would prejudice the results. If, for example, we had given them a series of specific questions to answer, their answers would probably have been framed in the categories in which the questions themselves were framed. Since one of the things we wanted to find out was whether they had assimilated our approach to the problem of writing, and since the clearest evidence of such assimilation would be the spontaneous use of our categories, we decided that any attempt to pre-structure their testimony would be a form of begging our research question.

To insure further the experimental reliability of their critiques, we did the following: 1) Students were told to ignore, as far as possible, the particular teaching skill or classroom personality of their instructor in their evaluation of the course. While from an absolute point of view such a distinction is almost impossible for most students to make, the fact that we insisted upon it did lead to a greater degree of relative objectivity in their evaluations. 2) Students were informed that as far as their grade for the course was concerned, the only thing necessary was to have their critiques handed in by the end of the term. Students were emphatically told that in no way would their comments, pro or con, affect their final grade; that in fact their critiques would not be read by anybody until after their grade had been submitted to the registrar's office. What we wanted from them was a perfectly candid and spontaneous response. It would have been unrealistic of us to assume that the students of today, most of whom are very grade-minded, could feel free to be perfectly candid and spontaneous if they suspected that their remarks might have an effect, however slight, upon their final grades.

Most of the students responded well to our request. Their critiques show care and judgment. Some students, unfortunately, freed from the motivation of grades, and pressed by the demands of approaching final examinations in other courses (we had no such examination), did not write as well or as thoughtfully as they had shown themselves capable of doing in their essays. In our analysis of their testimony, we have taken this fact into consideration. Greater weight has been given to those critiques which give an over-all impression of greater care in their preparation. Those critiques apparently written in haste, however, were not ignored; at least it might be claimed that they possess the virtue of spontaneity. The fact that so many students, at a very difficult time of the term for most of them, and freed from the usual motivations of end-of-term, chose to give us carefully prepared analyses of their reactions to the course is, we believe, an encouraging sign.

In assessing the meaning and significance of the critiques, a number of difficult problems had to be considered. Since students had been asked to give a highly personal reaction, simply in terms of what they liked or disliked about the course, the critiques taken together tend to be somewhat unstructured; that is, students tended to react within a framwork of personal and necessarily idiosyncratic responses, a fact which inevitably makes it difficult for us to give a highly precise or perfectly worked out description of their evaluations. However, this fact does not mean that it is impossible to detect certain patterns of praise or blame; and on the bases of these recurring patterns our analysis is made. Sometimes these patterns emerge in the use, consistent through many critiques, of our experimental vocabulary, our categories. Sometimes these patterns had to be detected by us through the screen of many dissimilar terms which different students would use to make essentially the same point; for example, students found many different, and frequently oblique, ways of saying that they approved of the kind of attitude toward writing which the course encouraged. Sometimes the patterns of response are such that we are not certain of what they mean or of whether we are describing them from a proper point of view. For all these reasons, then, our report of what the critiques contain must be somewhat impressionistic; and we are very well aware of how easily our impressions of these "recurring patterns" may have been, in ways beyond our ability to analyze, significantly determined by our experimental expectations.

Another problem facing our evaluation of the critiques is the fact that the course was taught by different instructors. Here again subjective factors are so subtly involved that they seem beyond the reach of precise analysis. Even though our experimental instructors were working from a common syllabus, they inevitably had to color the material--to an unknown extent--through their special style of teaching, their prejudices, their individual responses to particular sections of the syllabus and their consequently differing emphases. The critiques, in short, frequently reflect the personality of the instructor. Since we could not ask our teachers to abandon their personalities on the threshold of the classroom, and become automatons in the name of experimental "science," it is exceedingly difficult to decide whether any student's reaction is the result of a response to a particular teaching personality or to the material in itself. We have already noted that we asked students to refrain from making explicit comments on the personality of their teacher, but that, realistically speaking, it is almost impossible for them to sustain such a distinction between course and instructor. We have tried, therefore, to overcome this problem in analysis by looking for recurring patterns of response which seem relatively common to all three sections, each of which was taught by a different instructor.

The positive reactions to the course far outweighed the negative reactions. That we generally got both kinds of reactions from most students is due, of course, to the nature of the question we asked them to answer in the critique. That we received more of one kind that the other is, we believe, the first sign that the course was successful. In addition, many of these positive reactions show a direct and encouraging involvement with the spirit and content of the experiment; whereas many of the negative reactions are concerned with matters of practical execution, rather than with matters of experimental substance. What follows is a point-by-point descriptive and critical analysis of the most important patterns of reaction discoverable in the critiques.

1. Many students reported that they enjoyed the course. They were apparently willing to say this of the course as a whole, and not to confine their judgment to this or that special part. Sometimes their comments were surprisingly enthusiastic: "As for the course itself, I can only say that it has been fun. I have never enjoyed a class as much as this one." "I don't remember when I have enjoyed a class any more. . . ." "I don't think it would be an exaggeration to call Project English both one of the most meaningful and most enjoyable classes I've encountered in my seven terms at MSU." We are dealing here, of course, with the special problem of "atmosphere." That the atmosphere was, for the most part, highly favorable, there can be little doubt. The reasons why the atmosphere should have been so favorable, however, are less certain. The experimental nature of the course, a fact which was never withheld from the students, must be taken into account. Students inevitably seem to react more favorably when they are conscious that they are in an

experimental section: "Probably the most outstanding good point of the course...is the experimental atmosphere surrounding it, leaving the student free to try the new techniques without fear of a great deal of criticism if his experiment falls flat." In other words, the announcement that the course was experimental relieved many students from the anxieties they encounter in many other courses and enabled them to relax: they knew from the beginning that they would not be penalized because of mistakes on the part of those conducting the experiment. Also, they were aware that they were co-partners in an attempt to discover new methods of teaching composition, and that therefore they as students were entitled to a sense of importance greater than they would have had in an ordinary course.

Another reason, we believe, why they enjoyed the course is the content of the course itself. It is hard to believe how any experiment of this kind could sustain interest over a ten week period simply by billing itself as an experiment; the very nature of the experiment must contain within itself seeds of enjoyment. The seeds, as we see it, were novelty and genuine challenge. As one of our best students summed it up: "Taking English 213 has been like milking a green heifer for the first time. It is hard to decide whether the milk is worth the frustration of making her hold still. I have never agonized over a course so much, but I have seldom enjoyed one more. Discovering reality and clearly communicating it is hard labor. I really drove myself on those themes, rewrote them, swore at myself...and searched my soul. I searched, if not more deeply, at least more systematically than ever before in my life. At the same time I was constantly challenged by the demands and always thrilled by the insights that crystallized in my mind. ...Any course which can produce action of this intensity is the near ideal." The enjoyment caused by the experiment, then, was not divorced from that kind of difficult thinking and careful writing which must be expected in any writing course. That we managed to make such thinking and writing "enjoyable" we count as a significant gain. Our students were not catered to; they were not told that they would not be ultimately responsible for the quality of their work. Instead, many of them were given their first genuine taste of what Yeats has called, in another context, the "fascination of what's difficult."

2. The assignment of the journal was highly regarded by most of our students. Some of them testified that they had often thought of keeping a journal but that until they were motivated by this course they had not done so. Others reported that at first they did not have the vaguest idea of what a journal was and that it was not until almost halfway through the term before they began to understand even partially what they were supposed to be doing. Practically all of them, however, seemed to be flattered by the idea. For many it was their first experience of being told in a large and inevitably depersonalized university that they were important as individual persons, that their private thoughts and reactions were highly significant, and that these were worth committing to words on a page.

Many of the students testified that they experienced a freedom in writing their journal which they had never experienced before in writing. Some said that it was a freedom from the obscure terrors of the rules of "correct" writing: "The journal was a big help because I could write whatever I pleased in it and not worry about form... ." Others discovered, apparently for the first time, the pleasures of writing for its own sake, without thinking about the academic judgment known as a grade: "The greatest thing about the journal writing was that we weren't immediately pressed into writing for grades--the old competitive, forced feeling wasn't there. This method, I believe, is an excellent way of encouraging writing." This freedom from the threat of a grade also encouraged the spontaneity and honesty of their thinking; they knew that when writing in their journals there was no such thing as a "correct" answer and that they had to cater to no teacher's special interests or prejudices: "I enjoyed compiling the journal, since it gave me a chance to attempt to put my thoughts and reflections down on paper without having to fulfill set requirements for grading purposes. This gave me a greater sense of liberty in being able to write about what was strongest in my mind rather than having to evolve a forced response to a topic." Others discovered that the habit of keeping a journal helped to free them from the fear of writing itself: "Being forced to write so often in my journal helped me a great deal to overcome my fear of writing."

Many valued the journal because, as they claim, it helped them to discover what they really thought and felt about things. It was for them a vehicle of self-exploration and self-realization. As one student put it: "The idea of keeping a journal of our thoughts was excellent. So many thoughts just run through our minds and we never formulate a definite opinion because we are never challenged to state them. This helped me discover what I really felt about a variety of topics." The "challenge to state" oneself in the journal enabled one student to feel "an honest need to express myself," another "to better define vague ideas that we had always had but had never bothered to put into writing." This testimony seems to prove again an assertion that has been often made, namely, that a thought is never really a thought until one has been forced to formulate it in words. One student personified the journal as a "paper psychiatrist," a metaphor which implies both the freedom of self-expression he felt in his journal and the hope that the journal would help him toward valuable self-knowledge. Another student, stressing the highly personal nature of the journal, put this same point more precisely: "The journal was a very natural outlet for creativity. For when you write for yourself in a very personal manner, you tend to search yourself more thoroughly. You learn to uncover the aspects of an experience you have unconsciously hidden from yourself. The real worth of the course was in letting us know they were there." It seems clear from this testimony that the journal was one of the experiment's most important means of achieving what we consider to be a sine qua non of good writing, namely, the sense of being a person when one writes, of standing at the center and as the origin of one's thoughts and feelings as they are revealed in written language. Certainly in the journal students were encouraged to be "persons" in this sense; and certainly many of them discovered for themselves, and for the first time perhaps, what it "feels like" to use words to express a personal sense of what is real. And this feeling, we believe, is the primary motivation behind all successful learning of how to write.

Closely related to this personal sense of what is real is an awareness of the manner in which one tends to think about things. After a student has had the experience of putting his reactions into words on a page, he can go back over these entries and begin to examine himself from a relatively objective point of view. He is then in a position to judge when the manner in which he thinks is likely to lead to fruitful results, when it is not. As one student testified: "The journal was a big help, not only in that it taught me how to write but it taught me how to think. One thing that I noticed about the whole course, is that it helped to develop one's thought patterns." (A curious implication of these remarks, and one which, we are afraid, reflects a widespread and erroneous notion about the learning of writing, should be noted: that somehow one can learn how to write well without also improving one's ability to think.) Another student found that the task of keeping a journal forced him to control his thinking: "The journal was a great help... . It was interesting to see how I felt about certain topics and more important it disciplined my organization of thoughts."

Finally, the journal helped students to develop a habit of articulation, a regular necessity to state themselves in words. Many of them discovered that the constant challenge to verbalize themselves enabled them to discover for themselves that the verbal means to meet successfully this challenge were already, in a sense, theirs; and that all they needed was the regularity of the journal assignment to provoke their words into efficient readiness. One student put it this way: "The first entries were abstract, wordy, and clumsily constructed. I can remember how I labored trying to force words on to the page. As I practiced, however, the writing became easier and toward the end I found it more difficult to cut my words down than to try to find words." Certainly the journal helped many students to make a similar discovery.

3. Most writing classes spend a considerable amount of time analyzing models of writing, and our Project English classes were no exception. But we did place an emphasis greater than usual on models taken from the work of the students themselves. Ordinarily one period a week was spent in such analysis. We discovered from the testimony of the students that our aims in this critique were largely fulfilled.

In the first place, students reported that they felt a greater degree of personal involvement in such analyses than they would have felt in the analysis of a traditional model taken from the work of a professional author. Sometimes, when a student's work was submitted to severe criticism and the general disapproval of his classmates, the student became aware of how his own self-respect was involved in the words he put on paper, and how for the sake of that self-respect he must strive to improve those words. One of our students put it this way: "The first time I heard one of my paragraphs read in class, I was quite sensitive about it. I made up my mind then and there that another one would not be read in class.... One finds it difficult to repeat a mistake once it has been exposed to the whole class." It seems evident from these words that this student's reaction, though apparently negative, does in fact involve a personal realization that he has readers whom he must serve, and a positive commitment to improve his writing. This student discovered the classroom critique to be the matrix of his motivation.

Other students reported this sense of personal engagement in different ways: one described the analysis of students' themes as "more of a reality because it was 'our' work. They were real and somehow personal." Another said that such analysis brings "the abstract ideas and concepts down to the personal level." What both these students are implying is the fact that the analysis of a traditional model taken from the work of professional authors is simply too remote for many students: they can see the goodness of these models, they can understand a description of the traditional virtues found in them, but because they are so deeply, and sometimes painfully, aware of the distance between the quality of their work and the quality of the work of these professionals, they simply do not believe they are capable of attaining such excellence. The professionals are, after all, the professionals; and their writing virtues are obviously beyond the range of the students' possibilities. The judgment of the students on this point is basically correct: the vast majority of them will never write as well as those "masters" of prose style whose works fill the standard college anthology. And therefore the students have an understandable right not to feel fully motivated by an analytic exposure to their work.

But if they can be shown excellence in the work of their classmates, then the possibility of such excellence is "more of a reality" for them. If they cannot hope to emulate the writing brilliance of a Hemingway or a Newman, they can certainly strive to write as well as, if not better than, the student who sits next to them. Criticism by students of their own work leads many of them to a discovery by themselves of meaningful norms of quality--meaningful because they are personally relevant. One student described his sense of personal 1 engagement in the critique in this way: "I enjoyed the excerpts and complete themes handed out in class which were the products of the students themselves. They gave me the opportunity to compare my progress with my classmates... ." We believe that such a comparison with the evolving competence of his peers is far more encouraging to the average student of writing than a comparison of his work with the work of a (in this instance) too-competent professional. Even from a negative point of view, the kinds of incompetence discovered by students in their own work were more personally relevant than the usual textbook example: "I found the critiques...to be a great help. Through these writings [of my classmates] I could see the mistakes that my peers had made and correct my writing accordingly."

Perhaps the most valuable thing the in-class critique helped students to acquire was a sense of distance from their work, an ability to judge objectively the effectiveness of their words--almost as if they had been written by someone else. Many students had never had the experience of hearing their written work submitted to a personal and analytic reaction. They were accustomed to writing in a vacuum as it were, to turning in so many words for a certain course and a certain instructor, and to receiving little more than a grade for their efforts. These students had lost the sense which we believe to be crucial to effective writing, namely, that one tends to write well both as a person and with a firm conviction that there are other persons waiting to hear what the writing person has to say. Obviously the critique helped to re-establish this sense of writing as an act of personal communication. One student writes: "For the first time, I heard how my writing affected others." By encouraging a series of free and personal reactions to a piece of writing, the critique gave the student author a number of personally relevant points of view which he might then use to acquire and sustain a sense of distance from his work. Some students, who had no distance at all, were startled to discover that their words did not communicate to others what had been intended: "I was quite surprised at how differently some of the other students interpreted some of the things I had written. I obviously hadn't been objective enough in my writing." The fact that for this student it was his fellow-students who misunderstood "some of the things I had written," is, we believe, of crucial significance. Just as professional examples are too remote from the students' sense of his writing potential, so it is not infrequent that students regard a teacher's reaction to his work as being inevitably too professional, that is, too demanding and perhaps too cantankerous. But when students discover what they had thought to be their simplest and clearest words misunderstood by their own classmates, then the peculiar psychological difficulties always present in the writing classroom no longer pertain. They cannot claim, even secretly, that it is their instructor's excessively professional demands which make their words unclear; the simple fact is that their words are unclear. The non-professionals, their classmates, have given their judgment in their own terms, not in the terms of the instructor--a judgment above academic suspicion. In an objective and personally relevant way, then, the testimony of their classmates leads students toward the acquisition of distance. Also, by learning how to criticize the work of their classmates, students learn to criticize their own work; by acting as editors on the work of others, they prepare themselves to be editors of their own work. Students testified to this growth in the objectivity of their editorial judgment; for example: "By looking at what my classmates were writing I could become objective and criticize their writing. This made it easier to compare my own writing, and then to be more objective in criticizing it."

4. In their critiques the students seemed to understand that we were concerned not simply with giving another writing course but with implanting in them a wholly new attitude toward the problem of writing, a wholly new way of thinking about what they ought to be doing when they sit down to write. One student explicitly acknowledged the fact and value of this emphasis: he asserted that the course "taught me to develop my own way of writing, more often called style. It spent most of the time on attitude which is the most important aspect in writing well."

That a course could be conducted in this fashion, without the traditional emphasis on usage, punctuation, and so on--that in fact a course in writing could be given without time being spent on grammar, seemed to fulfill the long-held expectations of a number of students. One, happy with the experimental approach, complained in passing that "English education needed to escape from its rigid Victorian ideology." We understand by the phrase "rigid Victorian ideology" that prescriptive approach which prefers to intimidate students with the intricacies of grammatical usage rather than show students how to tap their sources of productive thinking. Another student saw the distinction that must be made between the teaching of writing and the teaching of grammar: "Too much emphasis has been placed on grammar and English usage in the usual English course. Writing has been given short shrift." Another student gave what is perhaps the most damning judgment we have ever seen of that approach which tries to teach students how to write by teaching them how to be "correct": "I have been exposed to English courses before, but this was certainly my first course in writing. These other courses were only interested in grammar. I wrote the same at the end of each term as I had at the beginning, only my comma placement varied."

There are a variety of ways of describing the attitude which our experiment was designed to teach. Obviously this whole report is concerned with the anatomy and implementation in the classroom of that attitude. But for the sake of this section let us say that a good writing attitude includes an understanding of three essential points: 1) that writing must involve thinking, and that this thinking is done in what we have called the pre-writing stages; 2) that the kind of thinking which is valuable for writing is always personal thinking; 3) that when confronted with this demand for personal thinking about a subject, the struggling writing student is not helpless; there are means which he can exploit to induce it.

One of the remarkable things the critiques revealed is that there were students in our course who had been in the habit of writing without ever feeling the absolute necessity of genuine thought. One student wrote about his work in the course: "I was forced to think, something I've not really had to do in writing a paper since I began. In these days when pressures are great and time is scarce, it is easy to dash off a paper that merely skims the surface of the mind." Another student made a similar confession: "I used to just sit down and reel off a paper without really thinking about it, but this course has taught me how valuable the pre-writing period is. In this course I found that I always ended up spending more time in preparing to write the paper than in the actual writing of the finished paper." The fact that both these students managed to get so far in their academic careers without ever realizing the necessity of thinking before writing indicates, we believe, the existence today of a great deal of "automatic language" which students, in their anxious pursuit of grades and degrees, rapidly learn how to manipulate. Such manipulation of thought-clichés, canned responses suitable for any academic occasion, jargon words, phrases, sentences, etc., is of course not writing. What is perhaps even more remarkable (and dismaying) is, not that students have been conditioned into becoming clever manipulators of such automatic language, but that this kind of unwitting and witless dishonesty does earn passing grades and, ultimately, degrees. We cannot say how widespread is this habit of language without personal thought, but its existence must be recognized as one of the principal causes of poor undergraduate writing.

The escape from automatic language begins when students learn the necessity of thinking personally. One of our better students remarked: "I have learned the value of writing for myself. I am afraid that before this term I tended to write what I felt would be appropriate and acceptable." So deeply ingrained in some students is the habit of writing the "appropriate and acceptable," that the experiment's demand for personal thinking caused considerable anxiety: "Each composition was a struggle for me. I couldn't express what I knew and what I felt within myself. It has been most painful for me to realize that I am not profound, and that I must accept myself as I am." Perhaps this student's final judgment of himself is not correct. We prefer to believe that this student, whose thinking processes had probably for years been smothered by the demand for "appropriate and acceptable" thoughts, was just beginning, by the end of the course, to discover a potential for a genuine discovery within himself.

That the experiment taught means of inducing productive thinking was testified to by a number of students. One commented on a greater sense of method which he felt when getting ready to put words on a page: "For me, the keynote of this course has been the learning to think in somewhat of a structured way. Previous writing exercises would see me ponder haphazardly until the proverbial 'brainstorm' hit." Another implicitly testified that the specific techniques taught by the course help a student escape the dreary path of "appropriate and acceptable" thinking and writing: "Writing is no longer slapping down five hundred words of 'conventional wisdom'. There are now different techniques and mental exercises to be used in preparing a paper. These range from 'existential sentences' to 'seed-idea' openings." Another student testified that the course's emphasis on the pre-writing stages proved more valuable to him than that approach, largely negative, which criticizes a piece of writing after the blunders have been made: "I think that you have found the key. This key is the emphasis on the all-important pre-writing stages. To me this is the most difficult part, and the basic practices which I have been taught...have improved my writing significantly. In all my other English courses, I have been confronted with endless debate and criticism over the final draft; cutting apart the mechanics and ideas but offering very little criticism that would help the writer." As this student indicates, and as we firmly believe, an approach which emphasizes the initial attitude one should take to the challenge of writing has a greater chance of producing positive results.

5. Of the various techniques taught by the course the one most frequently discussed by students in their critiques was the use of a concrete analogy as the organizing perspective of an essay. Many students commented on how the use of this technique forced them into a thoughtful engagement with their subjects, into an encounter between mind and material which they had not experienced before in writing. One student wrote: "Before I took this class I took an attitude of evasiveness toward writing. I would write abstractly and hope the instructor would read in what he wanted and assume that that was what I meant. I tried this once and found that it could not be done with the analogy. In order to write a good paper using the analogy I found that I must be concrete not because the instructor says to but because I cannot...make the analogy fit if I am not concrete in my approach." The analogy, in short, did not permit the student to wander through that world of undifferentiated abstractions which the undergraduate mind so frequently prefers. The analogy, the students rapidly discovered, was a puzzle form which tended to convert subjects into intriguing problems insistently demanding solutions. As one

student put it: "As I walked from my classes or even when relaxing I thought of the course and the analogies necessary to the assigned themes. I've found myself enjoying talking at length with others in regard to various theme subjects and how they feel toward them in an attempt to clarify my own thoughts. This course is a soul-searcher and really digs out the basic thoughts of the mind." Another student saw the analogy as a catalyst, as a way of mobilizing thinking into the service of an essay: "The analogy also helps to give me ideas when I have absolutely nothing to say on a subject."

One student displayed a thoughtful awareness of how the act of making an analogy is intimately involved with the creative process, with the mind's ability to re-structure its experience into new worlds of meaning: "For instance, when you look at the stem of a rose, you may see the backbone of a man, a trunk of a tree, the stem of life, the force that holds the plant together. As can be seen, you are creating by this process. New thoughts come into your mind; you can see your thoughts much clearer. The clearer the thought within yourself, the easier it is to put on paper." This student has discovered for himself, we believe, one of the most important advantages of using a concrete analogy in an essay, an advantage we had not thought of in our original decision to employ this technique: namely, that the concrete analogy is not only meaning-provoking and meaning-structuring, but also is "meaning-visualizing" ("you can see your thoughts"); it provides a way of showing, not telling, a thought to oneself; it provides a writer with a visual image--a map as it were--of the area of possible statement which he is exploring.

Other students testified to this kind of mental clarity which the analogy encourages: "It is a technique that seems to bring an abstract subject closer to the reader, and the writer too... . For not only did the subject seem clearer to me, but through an interesting perspective, writing actually was fun. I learned to 'play' with ideas, to let myself go, to gain new insight... ."

This gaining of new insight, we believe, would not have been possible without that initial clarifying of a potential approach to a subject which the analogy provides: the mind can engage in creative play far more readily with a set of images than with a collection of abstractions. Abstractions to be successful must submit to precise definition and to the fairly rigid and narrow categories of logic; images, however, are involved in the almost inexhaustible arrangements of the particulars of the world of time and space.

Another student understood the relation between the use of analogy and the need for organic form in an essay: "The analogy approach stresses organization and growth--perhaps the most important part--of thought, rather than layout." It is important to observe, we believe, the implication of these remarks: the analogy is involved with the intrinsic mental processes of pre-writing, not with the extrinsic outline ("layout") of an essay. And because of this intrinsic involvement, it can become a shaping and directing force in the growth of an idea into the final words of an essay; or, as one student put it, the writer can discover in this use of an analogy that his "thoughts will be directed; his language will be freshened; his essay will achieve a unity with no extraneous parts."

6. Many of the negative reactions to the course, which were far outweighed by the positive, were concerned with matters of practical execution rather than with matters of experimental substance. Some students, for example, complained about the piecemeal way in which the mimeographed materials of the course were handed out; they would have preferred to have received the materials all at once, to have that kind of security a bound, thoroughly solid textbook can sometimes provide. (We had decided at the outset, however, that there was more to be gained than lost in terms of rhetorical effectiveness by keeping our students guessing as to what was coming next; their encounter with the stages of pre-writing was to be as much of a journey of discovery as we could make

it appear.) Many students complained about the shortness of the course; they felt they were just getting "warmed up" when the course came to a halt. Perhaps this complaint is due to the design of the course and to the fact that we did not have our students write their first formal essay until the course was almost half over. Perhaps, also, this complaint might be regarded as a negative tribute to the course's success, as an indication that by the end of ten weeks many students were finally becoming aware of the challenge and rewards of actualizing themselves in writing, and were anxious for more such challenges. One student confessed that he was disturbed by the course's grading policies (we gave no grades over the first half of the term), and revealed perhaps the weakest kind of motivation that can be found in a writing course: "I also disliked the absence of a letter grade on our first themes, for it gave me no idea of how my writing and papers stood in relation to the rest of the class. I felt a lack of incentive due to a lack of grade."

In matters of experimental substance, some students complained about three principal things: the in-class critiques, the assignment of the journal, and the use of an analogy in an essay.

Even though some students found personal motivation in the submission of their work to negative criticism in the in-class critiques (see p. 82 above), others found such criticism merely depressing: "It's a terrible feeling to have your classmates tear apart something which you have worked hard to construct. The positive element gives much more encouragement to try again than the negative approach." Certainly an excess of negative criticism is one of the dangers of the in-class critique, and perhaps our instructors were not at all times watchful enough to keep it within reasonable limits. Nothing can be more self-contradictory in a course devoted to the encouragement of personal thinking than to have the first attempts at such thinking heedlessly rejected by a group of one's peers.

Some students felt the journal assignment, and especially the fact that these journals were read by the instructors, to be an invasion of their privacy. As one student put it (in the most extreme statement of this sentiment which we received): "I have no idea how well I did in writing it or if I recorded what I was supposed to but I thought it was ridiculous. In the first place, I do not think it is anyone's business what I do or think and I do not desire a complete stranger to read something that, I feel, is extremely personal. As a result of this, I found it very difficult to think of something to say because I did not desire to be ridiculed openly or otherwise by anyone. Although the class was informed that these journals would be private, I did not believe that some of the entries a person might make would be kept secret and not discussed among the department." While this comment is not typical of the negative reactions to the journals which we received, it does clearly indicate the exceptional tact with which this assignment must be handled. Our instructors were told never to comment about the specific revelations a student might sometimes make, only about the general approach, sincerity and sense of personal involvement he displayed in his entries. Apparently, for a reason we have been unable to determine, this student had no confidence in our pledge that all entries in the journal would be treated as "privileged" information.

Finally, and perhaps of most significance, some students wondered about the usefulness of the concrete analogy as the controlling perspective of an essay. Some complained that the technique seemed not to encourage their thinking but to act as a brake. As one student put it, the "analogy was too much of a limitation on the free expression of our thoughts; many of us thought that using analogy forced us to be too mechanical and that much of our meaning was lost." Another student commented that "many times I've been forced to omit some creative ideas and make my papers strained because I was unable to think of a good analogy and simply had to use any one as a last resort. I don't exactly see why an analogy will clarify my thoughts if I have trouble finding a suitable one to use." Even though the majority of our students testified to the heuristic potential they discovered in the analogy, perhaps it is not a technique which can be made to work successfully for all students. Lacking the necessary information, we are in no position to speculate on this point. Perhaps those students who felt hindered rather than helped by the analogy already had strongly fixed habits of structuring conceptualization, and found that the technique of the concrete analogy merely interfered with these habits. Perhaps, also, these students simply did not have the necessary patience to explore fully the possibilities of the technique for themselves. A ten week course does not provide sufficient evidence for us to make a judgment on these questions.

* * * *

It is almost impossible to make a coherent comparison between the critiques from the experimental sections and the critiques from the control sections. These had been assigned in the same fashion they had been assigned in the experimental sections: students were asked to write a short statement on what they liked or disliked about English 213, and were told that their comments would in no way affect their grades. The control critiques generally appear to be about as sincere as the experimental critiques, and they reflect the same variation in the quality of preparation (see p. 73 above). But after this fact held in common, specific comparisons tend to break down. Whereas the experimental critiques were in response to a carefully worked out syllabus taught in all three experimental sections, and therefore tend to reflect a general similarity of concerns, the control critiques reflect a bewildering variety of teaching materials, methods, emphases, etc. Some students, for example, were happy with intensive drilling in basic mechanics; others wondered why this had to be taught in a college class. Some students were grateful for the chance of discovering "unfavorable writing habits"; other students apparently became highly preoccupied with a special teaching emphasis of a particular instructor: "Finally, and most important of all, I am now able to recognize passive verbs, and I know how to correct them." Practically all the control critiques tended to speak of writing as an essentially extrinsic problem: the arrangement of "correct" words according to prescribed rules of "good" writing behavior. Very few of these critiques displayed any awareness of those intrinsic problems of thinking and conceptualization which the experimental course was designed to deal with. Further evidence (if any be needed) was found in the control critiques of what could almost be called an undergraduate neurosis on the subject of writing: "To begin with, expository writing always appeared to me as a class to fear and stay away from." "For many years I dreaded expository writing, always feeling sick whenever I heard the words, 'We will write a theme today'." The alleviation of this fear, according to the accounts of the students, seemed in the control sections to be the result more of the skillful encouragement of an experienced instructor than of any objectified method.

Instructor Evaluation

The evaluations by the instructors of the experimental course were, for the most part, favorable. (We are speaking principally of those instructors who had little part in the actual designing of the course. There were two such instructors, who were selected from the regular staff of the department, and who taught two of the three experimental sections in both Winter and Spring terms. These were trained by the research staff in regular meetings throughout the year. One experimental section in both Winter and Spring terms was taught by the research assistant to the Project. Obviously his testimony cannot be given quite the same weight in this evaluation because of his prior involvement in the planning of the course and his personal commitment to its hypotheses. This fact has been taken into consideration in preparing this section.) They testified, as the students had, to the general atmosphere of excitement surrounding the experimental situation. They reacted favorably to the highly wrought organization of the course, and claimed they had a much greater sense of proceeding according to a significant plan than they had had in the past when teaching English 213 in the traditional way and according to the standard text books approved by the department.

One was pleased with the assignment of the journal, a teaching method he had never considered before in an expository writing class. He claimed that reading the journals put him into much closer contact with his students than he had ever previously experienced, and that it provided him with a vantage point for more accurately assessing their writing difficulties. Another reported that he was pleasantly surprised to discover in the journals that so many of his students had such vital personalities, a fact which he claimed was not obvious from the kind of essay he had come to expect in a 213 class.

All the instructors asserted that they found a great deal of personal and intellectual satisfaction in approaching the subject of composition through a consideration of the pre-writing stages. This fact we regard as both highly significant and highly promising. Too often the expository writing course in a college English department is considered among the least desirable from the point of view of the teaching staff, involving as it does when taught by traditional methods, very routine kinds of materials and a great deal of what can only be called remedial drudgery. While our course did not spare the instructors the tasks of careful preparation and painstaking correction of themes, at least these tasks were put within a more intellectually provocative context and seemed to be serving more intellectually significant aims. The correction of themes, for instance, according to the norms of either the procedure of the meditation or the technique of the concrete analogy, permitted our instructors to come to more specific and defined terms with the goodness or badness of a student's thinking; these norms gave our instructors a more comprehensive and meaningful vocabulary whereby they might analyze the success or failure of an essay. And in the matter of assigning essays, one instructor observed, " I had the feeling that when we did arrive at the assignment, I had prepared my students far more for the essential challenge of coming to grips with their thoughts. Too often in the past, I'm afraid, I had spent too much time in teaching the wrong kinds of things, with the wrong emphasis--material which could clear up certain kinds of relatively obvious mistakes, but which did not help very much in provoking meaningful thinking." This same instructor observed that he felt his students were responding in a more positive way and taking a more personal interest in their writing than in past writing courses which he had instructed. And he testified to his own satisfaction in seeing some of his students make an act of genuine self-discovery either in their journals or in the meditation.

One instructor, though generally agreeing with many of the hypotheses of the course, took issue with the emphasis placed upon the use of a concrete analogy as the organizing perspective of an essay. He argued that the use of such an analogy, while theoretically sound, placed very great burdens upon the verbal competence of his students, that it frequently made demands far exceeding the range of technical proficiency in language which can be expected of students at the 213 level. While assenting to the importance of teaching pre-writing, he wondered whether any advance made by a student in this area could ever be adequately seen and measured unless the student was also shown how to improve in mere "writing," in the ability to verbalize his supposedly improved thinking. This instructor claimed that the course did not give sufficient attention to this problem, and that in the future any teaching of pre-writing should be closely allied to intensive training in more traditional forms of rhetoric.

All in all, however, the instructors of the experimental sections tended to agree that the course proved an illuminating experience for them, as well as for their students; and that they had become far more conscious of the complexities and difficulties of being a teacher of composition. One instructor even questioned whether there ever could be, in the terms developed by the course, a true "teacher" of composition; as he put it, "After all, a composition instructor fools himself if he thinks he is teaching students how to write. At best he can do nothing more than provoke a situation, create an environment, in which students perhaps might teach themselves how to write. This course seems to provide more such situations."

Objective Evaluation by Outside Readers

To determine whether a course emphasizing pre-writing could lead to the production of measurably better essays, we had a sampling of essays from both the experimental sections and the control sections graded by a group of outside readers. These readers were selected because of their experience in teaching composition and the range of their educational backgrounds. There were 11 such readers, averaging approximately 14 years of teaching experience among them. Four were high school instructors, seven taught on the college level. Two held the B.A., two the M.A., the remaining seven all held Ph.D.'s in either literature or education. Many of the college level readers had publications of their own; one was a Pulitzer Prize winner.

Of the four complete essays written by students in the experimental sections, two were selected for grading by the outside readers. One was an essay on the subject of "Loneliness"; it was a meditation written approximately halfway through the course. The other essay was on the subject "Coming of Age";

this essay used the technique of the concrete analogy, and was the last essay students had to write in the course. We hoped by this kind of sampling to submit essays employing both of the principal techniques taught in the course to the evaluation of the outside readers, and also to determine whether the course produced any cumulative effect on the writing of students. The essays selected from the control sections were on the same subjects as the experimental essays. We hoped by this similarity of subjects to establish a more meaningful base of comparison. The control essays were generally assigned by the instructors of the control sections in the latter half of the term. We gave no indication to the control instructors as to how these essays should be taught and assigned; nor did we indicate which essay was to be assigned first. It was presumed that control instructors would assign these essays in their customary fashion.

226 essays from the experimental sections were read and graded; 409 essays from the control sections were read and graded. 111 of the experimental essays were on the subject "Coming of Age"; 115 experimental essays were on "Loneliness". 167 control essays were on "Coming of Age"; 242 control essays were on "Loneliness." All the essays were so coded and mixed that there was no way for an outside reader to determine which essays were control and which were experimental. Each reader read a group of approximately 80 essays in which the control and the experimental essays had been mixed on a proportional basis. There were two reading sessions at each of which 8 of our outside readers participated. (We were unable to secure all the same 8 readers at each session; only 5 of those who participated in the first session participated also in the second.) Each essay was read and graded twice, each time by a different reader. We hoped by this double reading to establish patterns of consistency in the grading, and also to determine whether a third reading

might be necessary to establish firmly the accuracy of our results. As it turned out (see statistical analysis below), no such third reading seemed necessary.

Our readers were instructed to grade essays according to the following rubric (a rubric designed to suggest our notions of organic form in the language of the more traditional categories of rhetoric):

1. All essays are to be judged on a four-point scale as follows:

   4 = Superior

   3 = Above Average

   2 = Below Average

   1 = Incompetent

2. Each reader will write the number of the essay (coded at the top of the first page) and the number of his evaluation on the slips provided. He should make no marks on the essay itself.
3. Each reader should ignore superficial errors in grammar or spelling. However, if the grammatical errors are such that they affect the major categories of goodness explained below, then of course grammar must figure as part of the total evaluation of the essay. But grammar by itself was not taught in the experimental sections, and so should not be singled out for judgment apart from the total effectiveness of the essay.
4. All the essays will be on one or the other of two topics: "Loneliness" or "Coming of Age." Accept any reasonable argument or thesis that a student may use to develop the topics. You are not to judge the topic but the student's handling of it. On the evaluation slips please indicate the topic of each essay by writing either "L" ("Loneliness") or "C" ("Coming of Age") after the number of the essay.

5. The major categories of excellence that each reader should apply are three: Unity, Coherence and Emphasis. Some of the qualities of each category are:

   a. Unity - The relation of materials to the subject.

      There seems to be one pre-eminent "shape" to the essay that controls the entire work.

      The writer has chosen a perspective upon his subject that delimits and fixes an exact and manageable topic.

      Each element in the essay seems necessary to the writer's purpose. The essay seems organized all through.

   b. Coherence - organization of parts that gives continuous development, relation, consecutiveness.

      The elements of the essay follow upon each other with satisfying and appropriate inevitability and control.

      The essay seems to grow naturally from the pre-eminent theme.

      The essay does not ramble.

      The consecutiveness of the essay is more a quality of the thought than a manner of expression (the transitions are organic and functional to the theme, rather than imposed and mechanical).

   c. Emphasis - relative importance of the parts.

      The essay has a richness of texture and relevant detail pertinent to the guiding purpose; it is not stark but has "body." The language is fresh and the ideas are more than "thought-clichés." The essay has a sense of climax, within sentences, within paragraphs, and in the whole; and there is no (unintentional) anti-climax. The whole

> composition seems to be constructed in the right proportions: the beginning is long enough and to the point; the middle is developed enough to the purposes of the pre-eminent theme, and the ending gives a sense of completeness, finality, conclusion. In short, the parts balance; there is esthetic poise to the whole.

In analyzing the results of this grading by outside readers, the first thing that was investigated was the reliability of the ratings obtained in the two reading sessions. Before we could proceed to compare meaningfully the ratings of the experimental and the control essays, we had to establish whether the ratings were an accurate measure of the essays' worth. We therefore examined the consistency of the scores by examining the extent of agreement and disagreement between the two ratings. It was assumed that if the ratings were reasonably consistent, they could be taken as a reliable measure from which subsequent analysis could derive. The results of this examination of consistency are summarized in Table A:

Table A - Differences Among Ratings

Difference in ratings	Experimental: "Loneliness:		Experimental: "Coming of Age"		Control: "Loneliness"		Control: "Coming of Age:		Totals	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
3	1	.9	1	.9	3	1.2	4	2.4	9	1.4
2	16	13.9	14	12.6	38	15.7	17	10.2	85	13.4
1	60	52.2	48	43.25	112	46.3	90	53.9	310	48.8
0	38	33.0	48	43.25	89	36.8	56	33.5	231	36.4
Total pairs of Ratings	115	100.0	111	100.0	242	100.0	167	100.0	635	100.0

As can be seen from Table A, the agreement among the ratings obtained in the two reading sessions was high. Of the total of 635 essays involved in the evaluation, 231, or 36.4% of the total, received the same grade. 310, or 48.8% of the total, received grades which differed by only one point. Thus the percentage of agreement in the ratings where the difference was one point or less was 85.2% of all the essays. In addition, this pattern of consistency seemed to prevail for the ratings of both the experimental and control essays taken individually. With regard to each of the four essays, the percentage of agreement in the ratings where the difference was one point or less ranged from 83.1% (control essay on "Loneliness") to 87.4% (control essay on "Coming of Age"). On the basis of these figures, we concluded that no third reading was necessary to establish meaningful ratings, and that the ratings could be used as a reasonably accurate measure upon which to base further analysis.

We then asked how the average ratings of each of the four different groups compared with one another. First, we calculated the mean rating of each group. Then we analyzed the differences among these means using a standard test of significance known as the "t" test. The results of this analysis are summarized in Table B:

Table B - Comparison of Mean Ratings for Experimental and Control Essays

	Experimental: "Loneliness"	Control: "Loneliness"	Experimental: "Coming of Age:	Control: "Coming of Age:
Number of Essays	115	242	111	167
Mean Rating	2.570	2.426	2.527	2.287
Standard Deviation	.632	.647	.654	.651
"t" Test	"t" equals 1.98 Significant at the .05 level		"t" equals 3.00 Significant at the .01 level	

As can be seen from Table B, significant differences between the control and the experimental essays were found with respect to each topic involved in the evaluation. In the case of each topic, the experimental essay received a higher mean rating than the corresponding control essay. From this fact we certainly do not conclude that in the general area of teaching expository writing, our experimental course will inevitably produce a better essay. We do conclude, however, that for the kinds of topics involved here, a course emphasizing what we have called pre-writing is likely to produce better results. And the fact that in the short space of ten weeks we were apparently able to help students toward measurably better essays--even if these essays were on carefully selected topics--we regard as encouraging.

The analysis summarized in Table B has further implications. It should be noted that the magnitude of the difference between the mean ratings of the experimental and the control essays was greater in the case of the "Coming of Age" essay. Perhaps this was due to the fact that the "Coming of Age" essay was the last assigned and written in the experimental course; and therefore, it might be argued, the improving effect of the experimental course was cumulative. But this can not be stated for certain, for we have no way of determining whether in the control groups, the "Coming of Age" essay was assigned before or after the "Loneliness" essay. (We know only that both control essays were written in the latter half of the course.) Also, it might be suggested that the greater apparent superiority in the case of the experimental "Coming of Age" essay was brought about by the explicit use in this essay of the technique of the analogy. Perhaps, therefore, it might be suggested that this technique is likely to produce a more noticeable improvement in students' writing than the technique of the meditation, which was used in the "Loneliness" essay. The figures do not permit us to do anything more than speculate on these alternate explanations. However, this possibly cumulative effect revealed in the final experimental essay suggests that other more specific experimentation in this area would seem warranted.

Subjective Evaluation by Outside Readers

As mentioned earlier (see p. 73), we also thought that a more subjective evaluation by outside readers would supplement meaningfully the objective evaluation that statistics could supply. We asked four colleagues from Michigan State to write such evaluations. We did not, in this case, mask the experimental from the "control" essays. We supplied each reader with a list of suggested questions that they might like to answer. The evaluations which these readers wrote are contained in Appendix B.

CHAPTER V

Conclusion

Henry Thoreau wrote in his journal: "Nothing goes by luck in composition. It allows of no tricks. The best you can write will be the best you are. Every sentence is the result of a long probation " (Feb. 28, 1841). There is probably no better motto than this for researchers in English composition. Under the pressure of the real crisis in the qualifications of teachers, two-thirds of whom admit they are inadequately prepared to teach composition, and under the pressure of government programs which seek something radically new to solve a radically original problem, we may be tempted to look for "tricks." Such a project as reported in these pages may seem, on first glance, to be just such a collection of "tricks" to dazzle project coordinators, teachers, and students alike. They may, ultimately, turn out to be merely "tricks," but they were not designed to be so. We began and ended our project with a firm existential premise: the best you can write will be the best you are. It is a humbling premise because it puts the teacher and his bag of "tricks" in second place, behind the student and his own personal encounter with experience and with himself. We assumed that the teacher can never give what only the years can give: that rich accumulation of the stuff of life from which writers fashion their sentences ("Every sentence is the result of a long probation"). We assumed in addition, however, that the teacher need not sit quietly and helplessly by as the student hives his hours. There are things--better things we think--to do than have been previously employed, to assist the student in this most crucial stage of the writing process: the stage of discovery.

In our brief project, we sought to isolate the structuring principle of this "pre-writing" activity, and then to devise exercises to allow students to imitate that principle in their own pre-writing. Ours did not pretend to be a complete course in writing. No one should infer that because we paid little attention to traditional rhetoric, we did not believe in the eventual necessity for it. Quite the contrary: effective communication demands that the writer have the highest regard for craft. But without what we called "the rhetoric of the mind," which it seemed to us had been insufficiently attended to, no instruction in "the rhetoric of the word" can make up for the fact that a writer has discovered essentially nothing new to say. In fact, to continue to over-emphasize the rhetoric of the word without paying attention to discovery reinforces that indifference to meaning that curses the modern worlds of politics and advertising (to name only two common areas).

We believe that further research might very well be undertaken in several areas of our entire project. Four possible future projects that occur to us would:

1. Seek to refine the use of analogy for different kinds of writing purposes. We briefly investigated both the larger sense of the analogy of all knowing, and the smaller instance of the concrete analogy. The dynamics of both need further investigation and exemplification.

2. Seek to throw more light on the relationship of a person's self-image to his behavior as a writer. What might the validity of self-image be as a predictor of successful behavior as writer? Is it, perhaps, a better indication of future success than vocabulary testing, or any of the more "objective" approaches to writing-as-skill, rather than to writing-as-attitude?

3. Seek to uncover to what degree our national "neurosis" about "correctness" in writing has inhibited or encouraged better performance among student writers. What kinds of attitudes, especially in the elementary grades, would provoke better writing among young people? More and more, we are convinced

that "writing" simply cannot be isolated as a "skill" and kept apart from the attitudes of the community. That is, we need more research on what we might call the "sociology of writing."

4. Seek to refine the precise relation of the journal--that is, the habit of private articulation--to the improvement of a student's attitude and performance as a writer.

These are only some of the topics for further research that occur to us as a result of our brief project. There are many more that might profitably be investigated.

Because our course was not complete, we can lay no claim to having produced complete writers (nor could any course make such a claim regardless of what it might pretend to do). The kind of writing that our students produced was that which immediately follows the discovery of fresh insight. Perhaps it had too much of the apocalyptic about it. In any event, it was not a kind of writing suitable to all possible occasions for written discourse --what single species of writing is? Certainly it was not the kind of writing suitable to business letters, but that matters less to us than it does to some of our critics. We believe that writing grounded in the principle of discovery and personal transformation could very well be the basic writing experience, the propaedeutic to all subsequent and more specialized forms of writing. The evidence of our testing shows that although we did not directly teach the entire writing process from pre-writing to re-writing, our students had enough training already and enough motivation to follow up their pre-writing discoveries with proper words in the proper places often enough clearly to emerge as superior in contest with our "control" sections where "tactics" provided the basis for nearly all the teaching.

More important to our way of thinking than the "raw" scores indicating superiority, though, is the sense we have that students in our course have been given a whole new orientation within the old problem of writing. The problem now has for them a new frontier within which they have found unexplored territory worth investigating. More often than not, students were led into some kind of discovery in one or another assignment, whether through their journal, the meditation, or the analogy. And whether they had the craft in every instance to perfect their discoveries into finished essays was not so immediately to the point. As a result of what they themselves had discovered, writing became for many a more worthwhile, because more possible, activity than it apparently ever had been. And by making success of a significant kind possible in writing to average students, we also made it more desirable. In a small way, we had overcome some of our national neurosis about writing; perhaps for the first time, some of our students felt within themselves, along their pulses, that sense which the psychologist calls "self-actualization." As one student wrote, "I was made to feel that I was capable of creating something new. I was brought to an awareness of the world about me that I had just taken for granted. I really began to 'see.'" These must ultimately be the major reasons we teach persons to write: the renewed sense of self, the renewed vision of things.

APPENDIX A

Here follow the materials and exercises that we used in teaching the final form of our experimental course. We have not reprinted essays and parts of published books which are readily available to teachers. We simply list complete bibliographical information on such sources. The use of these materials in our course is described and explained in Chapter Three, "Procedure."

1. The Writer's Mask: The Role to be Played

> There is a relation between discipline and the theatrical sense. If we cannot imagine ourselves as different from what we are and assume that second self, we cannot impose a discipline upon ourselves, though we may accept one from others. Active virtue as distinguished from the passive acceptance of a current code is therefore theatrical, consciously dramatic, the wearing of a mask.
>
> --William Butler Yeats

2. The Practice of Art

We selected a series of comments from Erich Fromm, The Art of Loving (New York: Harper, 1962), pp. 108-115.

3. The Creative Attitude

An essay by Erich Fromm appearing in the following:

Harold H. Anderson, ed. Creativity and Its Cultivation (New York: Harper, 1959), pp. 44-54.

4. Texts toward a Creative Attitude: From Thoreau's Walden

a. Moreover, I, on my side, require of every writer, first or last, a simple and sincere account of his own life, and not merely what he has heard of other men's lives; some such account as he would send to his kindred from a distant land; for if he has lived sincerely, it must have been in a distant land to me.

b. But alert and healthy natures remember that the sun rose clear. It is never too late to give up our prejudices. No way of thinking or doing, however ancient, can be trusted without proof. What everybody echoes or in silence passes by as true to-day may turn out to be falsehood to-morrow, mere smoke of opinion, which some had trusted for a cloud that would sprinkle fertilizing rain on their fields.

c. Undoubtedly the very tedium and ennui which presume to have exhausted the variety and the joys of life are as old as Adam. But man's capacities have never been measured; nor are we to judge of what he can do by any precedents, so little has been tried.

d. Could a greater miracle take place than for us to look through each other's eyes for an instant? We should live in all the ages of the world in an hour; ay, in all the worlds of the ages. History, Poetry, Mythology!--I know of no reading of another's experience so startling and informing as this would be.

e. How vigilant we are! Determined not to live by faith if we can avoid it; all the day long on the alert, at night we unwillingly say our prayers and commit ourselves to uncertainties. So thoroughly and sincerely are we compelled to live, reverencing our life, and denying the possibility of change. This is the only way, we say; but there are as many ways as there can be drawn radii from one centre.

f. In the long run men hit only what they aim at. Therefore, though they should fail immediately, they had better aim at something high.

g. Before we can adorn our houses with beautiful objects the walls must be stripped, and our lives must be stripped, and beautiful housekeeping and beautiful living be laid for a foundation: now, a taste for the beautiful is most cultivated out of doors, where there is no house and no housekeeper.

h. I wanted to live deep and suck out all the marrow of life, to live so sturdily and Spartanlike as to put to rout all that was not life, to cut a broad swath and shave close, to drive life into a corner, and reduce it to its lowest terms, and if it proved to be mean, why then to get the whole and genuine meanness of it, and publish its meanness to the world; or if it were sublime, to know it by experience, and be able to give a true account of it in my next excursion.

i. Shams and delusions are esteemed for soundest truths, while reality is fabulous. If men would steadily observe realities only and not allow themselves to be deluded, life, to compare it with such things as we know, would be like a fairy tale and the Arabian Nights' Entertainments.

j. We must learn to reawaken and keep ourselves awake, not by mechanical aids, but by an infinite expectation of the dawn, which does not forsake us in our soundest sleep.

5. Material for Journal

   a. What sensory details have been most vivid in your experience the last few weeks--details that you have enjoyed, details that have bored or disgusted you?

   b. Are you self-sufficient? Have you lost a former feeling of self-sufficiency?

c. Did you ever hold an unpopular opinion or belief? With what result? Did you ever court favor?

d. Are you afraid of being alone? Afraid of thinking? Afraid, in irrational ways, of other people?

e. How does your city street or a corner in your small town look in summer on a Sunday morning, a Saturday morning, a Monday morning, a Saturday afternoon, a Saturday night? On a cold winter night, on a morning in early spring, on a raw November afternoon?

f. How does a farm look in the opulence of midsummer, in a dry season, in heavy rains; at morning, noon, and evening in the same season and weather; in spring, summer, autumn, winter?

g. What surroundings stimulate you? Depress or annoy you? Why?

h. What basic attitude to religion or morals has been the prevailing one in your own family? What attitude to work? To money? To the different attitudes of some other family? In what situations have you seen these attitudes appear?

i. What beliefs, notions, or preferences of yours are really irrational prejudices, instead of basic principles? What or whom do you dislike for no sound reason? On what subjects do you rationalize, and by what processes?

j. Have you ever discovered from specific experience that friends change? That the home town doesn't stay the same? That a time comes when you wait between two worlds, the past and the future?

6. Thoreau on the Art of the Journal

a. It is wise to write on many subjects, to try many themes, that so you may find the right and inspiring one. Be greedy of occasions to express your thought. Improve the opportunity to draw analogies. There are innumerable avenues to a perception of the truth. Improve the suggestion of each object however humble however slight and transient the provocation. What else is there to be improved? It is not in vain that the mind turns aside this way or that: follow its leading; apply it whither it inclines to go. Probe the universe in a myriad points. Be avaricious of these impulses. You must try a thousand themes before you find the right one, as nature makes a thousand acorns to get one oak. He is a wise man and experienced who has taken many views; to whom stones and plants and animals and a myriad objects have each suggested something, contributed something.

b. Write often, write upon a thousand themes, rather than long at a time, not trying to turn too many feeble somersets in the air,--and so come down upon your head at last. Antaeus-like, be not long absent from the ground. Those sentences are good and well discharged which are like so many little resiliencies from the spring floor of our life--

a distinct fruit and kernel itself, springing from terra firma. Let there be as many distinct plants as the soil and the light can sustain. Take as many bounds in a day as possible. Sentences uttered with your back to the wall.

c. To set down such choice experiences that my own writings may inspire me and at last I may make wholes of parts. Certainly it is a distinct profession to rescue from oblivion and to fix the sentiments and thoughts which visit all men more or less generally, that the contemplation of the unfinished picture may suggest its harmonious completion. Associate reverently and as much as you can with your loftiest thoughts. Each thought that is welcomed and recorded is a nest egg, by the side of which more will be laid. Thoughts accidentally thrown together become a frame in which more may be developed and exhibited. Perhaps this is the main value of a habit of writing, of keeping a journal,---that so we remember our best hours and stimulate ourselves. My thoughts are my company. They have a certain individuality and separate existence, aye, personality. Having by chance recorded a few disconnected thoughts and then brought them into juxtaposition, they suggest a whole new field in which it was possible to labor and to think. Thought begat thought.

d. With thinking we may be beside ourselves in a sane sense. By a conscious effort of the mind we can stand aloof from actions and their consequences; and all things, good and bad, go by us like a torrent. We are not wholly involved in Nature. I may be either the driftwood in the stream, or Indra in the sky looking down on it. I may be affected by a theatrical exhibition; on the other hand, I may not be affected by an actual event which appears to concern me much more. I only know myself as a human entity; the scene, so to speak, of thoughts and affections; and am sensible of a certain doubleness by which I can stand as remote from myself as from another. However intense my experience, I am conscious of the presence and criticism of a part of me, which, as it were, is not a part of me, but a spectator, sharing no experience, but taking note of it, and that is no more I than it is you. When the play, it may be the tragedy, of life is over, the spectator goes his way. It was a kind of fiction, a work of the imagination only, so far as he was concerned. This doubleness may easily make us poor neighbors and friends sometimes.

7. The Return to the Concrete

All art, therefore, appeals primarily to the senses, and the artistic aim when expressing itself in written words must also make its appeal through the senses, if its high desire is to reach the secret spring of responsive emotions. It must strenuously aspire to the plasticity of sculpture, to the color of painting, and to the magic suggestiveness of music--which is the art of arts. And it is only through complete, unswerving devotion to the perfect blending of form and substance; it is only through an unremitting never-discouraged care for the shape and ring

> of sentences that an approach can be made to plasticity, to color, and that the light of magic suggestiveness may be brought to play for an evanescent instant over the commonplace surface of words: of the old, old words, worn thin, defaced by ages of careless usage.
>
> The sincere endeavor to accomplish that creative task, to go as far on that road as his strength will carry him, to go undeterred by faltering, weariness or reproach, is the only valid justification for the worker in prose. And if his conscience is clear, his answer to those who in the fullness of a wisdom which looks for immediate profit, demand specifically to be edified, consoled, amused; who demand to be promptly improved, or encouraged, or frightened, or shocked, or charmed, must run thus: My task which I am trying to achieve is, by the power of the written word to make you hear, to make you feel---it is, before all, to make you see. That---and no more, and it is everything. If I succeed, you shall find there according to your deserts: encouragement, consolation, fear, charm---all you demand---and, perhaps, also that glimpse of truth for which you have forgotten to ask.
>
> ---Joseph Conrad, "Preface" to
> The Nigger of the Narcissus

8. Concrete Expression

For the theory and practice of writing concretely, we drew upon an excellent discussion contained in a standard rhetoric readily available to most English teachers:

Newman P. Birk and Genevieve B. Birk, Understanding and Using English, 3rd ed. (New York: Odyssey, 1958), pp. 162-172.

9. The Sense of Sight

   a. What objects are stationary in the scene? List five specific features of each object mentioned.

   b. How are these stationary objects arranged? Do they form any definite pattern or shape with relation to one another?

   c. Can this pattern or shape be compared to the pattern or shape of more familiar objects?

   d. Does the scene as a whole have any definite shape?

   e. What objects are moving in the scene? List five specific features of each object mentioned. How are these features related, if at all, to the object's motion?

   f. How can the quality of this motion be described? Intensity? Direction? Rhythm?

   g. Does this motion form any kind of pattern?

h. Can the quality or pattern of this motion be compared to the quality or pattern of the motion of a more familiar object?

i. What are the colors of the scene? Is there a dominant color?

j. Can these colors be more vividly conveyed by appealing to well-known objects?

k. What is the source of light in the scene? If the scene is out-of-doors, what is the quality of the sunlight, if any?

l. How does the sunlight, or absence thereof, affect the visual aspects of the scene? Shadow? Haze? Glare? Clarity?

m. If the scene is in-doors, what is the source and quality of the light? How do these affect the visual aspects of the scene?

n. What is the most striking feature of each of the objects mentioned?

o. What are the most striking features of the scene as a whole?

p. Why are these features striking? Do they form any common impression?

The Sense of Hearing

a. Is the scene relatively noisy or relatively quiet?

b. Can the sound of the scene as a whole be generally classified?

c. What are the specific sources of sound in the scene?

d. How might each of these specific sounds be generally classified?

e. Can any of these sounds be compared to the sound of a more familiar object?

f. What is the intensity of each specific sound?

g. Do these sounds form any definite pattern or **rhythm**?

h. Can this pattern or rhythm be compared to the pattern or rhythm of the sound made by a more familiar object?

i. Are the sounds in any way musical? Can they be associated with the sound of any specific musical instrument?

j. Can words be found which in their own sound carry a suggestion of the sound they name?

k. What are the most striking sounds of the scene? Do they form any common impression?

10. Malcolm Cowley, "Sociological Habit Patterns in Linguistic Transmogrification."

This essay originally appeared in The Reporter, XV (September 20, 1956), 41-43.

11. The Writer and Abstractions

Ernest Hemingway, from A Farewell to Arms

I was always embarrassed by the words sacred, glorious, and sacrifice and the expression in vain. We had heard them, sometimes standing in the rain almost out of earshot, so that only the shouted words came through, and had read them, on proclamations that were slapped up by billposters over other proclamations, now for a long time, and I had seen nothing sacred, and the things that were glorious had no glory and the sacrifices were like the stockyards at Chicago if nothing was done with the meat except to bury it. There were many words that you could not stand to hear and finally only the names of places had dignity. Certain numbers were the same way and certain dates and these with the names of the places were all you could say and have them mean anything. Abstract words such as glory, honor, courage, or hallow were obscene beside the concrete names of villages, the numbers of roads, the names of rivers, the numbers of regiments and the dates.

E. B. White, "Democracy" from The New Yorker

We received a letter from the Writers' War Board the other day asking for a statement on "The Meaning of Democracy." It presumably is our duty to comply with such a request, and it is certainly our pleasure.

Surely the Board knows what democracy is. It is the line that forms on the right. It is the don't in don't shove. It is the hole in the stuffed shirt through which the sawdust slowly trickles; it is the dent in the high hat. Democracy is the recurrent suspicion that more than half of the people are right more than half of the time. It is the feeling of privacy in the voting booths, the feeling of communion in the libraries, the feeling of vitality everywhere. Democracy is a letter to the editor. Democracy is the score at the beginning of the ninth. It is an idea which hasn't been disproved yet, a song the words of which have not gone bad. It's the mustard on the hot dog and the cream in the rationed coffee. Democracy is a request from a War Board, in the middle of the morning in the middle of a war, wanting to know what democracy is.

12. The Existential Sentence

The beginning writer must learn how to break out of the sterile shell of his abstractions, how to re-discover the living, concrete world of sensible experience pressing in about him. Only if he can make himself habitually open to his real world, can he or anyone else (a reader, e.g.) be certain that all the writer's finely spun syllables have any genuine relationship to the "great out-there"--that world of flesh and blood, of rough stone and smooth sky--that world from which all good writing ultimately derives, and to which all good writing (and thinking) intimately returns.

The existential sentence is an abrupt way of accomplishing this necessary task. In such a sentence, an abstraction (e.g., "happiness") is yoked by a form of the verb to be (e.g., "is") to a vivid concrete embodiment (e.g., "warm puppy") of the concept the abstraction names. The general idea thus passes into the precise image. The vague concept is illuminated within the specific clarity of a sensible thing or event in the real world. The universe of abstractions is domesticated. Thus:

> Courage is holding a diaperless baby in your arms.
> Self-discipline is being able to stop after eating a single peanut.
> Glorious is the last word on the last question of the last exam during finals week.

The existential sentence is specific yet suggestive:

> Courage is holding steady with the mainsheet and the tiller when the mainsail begins bouncing on the waves.
> Courage is a smile and a white cane.
> Courage is Frank Lloyd Wright's design for the Guggenheim Museum.

It can often be freshly humorous:

> Self-confidence is wearing a bikini when you're ten pounds overweight.
> Optimism is driving your girl to her eight o'clock, even though you don't have a class all day.
> Middle-age is to take out a first subscription to Playboy.

It can make a vivid appeal to the senses:

> Courage is picking up a cold, green garter snake.
> Boldness is the first snip of soft, shoulder-length hair.

Or it can be derived directly from personal experience:

> Glorious is the view of the M.S.U. campus and East Lansing on a bright moonlit night from the top of the new parking ramp.
> Honesty is telling your folks you have poor grades-because you don't study.
> Precaution is unplugging the television during the week of final exams.
> Sacrifice is passing up the cherry pie for the plain jello in the cafeteria line.

It can even be tragic:

> Courage is a co-ed telling her mother that she is three months pregnant.

The poor existential sentence is sometimes nothing but an amplification through the use of a string of further abstractions:

> Honor is the moral sense that determines right from wrong for the people in our society.
> Glory is honor won at great deliberate personal jeopardy, not by being in the right place at the right time.
> Sacrifice is giving up something very dear to you for the eventual good of your fellow man or yourself.

The existential sentence ought to avoid the conventional:

Courage is the soldier on the front lines.
Honor is obeying your parents.
Glory is spring's greenery.
Sacrifice is a dying soldier.
Glory is the birth of a baby.

It also ought to avoid that concrete detail or specific illustration which, through overuse, has become almost another abstraction:

Honor is the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D. C.
Glory is the halo surrounding the head of an angel.
Courage is the smile of hope on the face of a saddened person.
Glory is the rising of the sun.

Discuss the following:

1. Stubbornness is the captain on a sinking ship.
2. Idiocy is a smile on your face when you feel the tears forming in your eyes.
3. Sacrifice is an afternoon spent reading to the blind while the rest of the crowd goes to the football game.
4. Sacrifice is giving up boys for Lent.
5. Courage is raising your hand during a lecture in a class of 500.
6. Prudence is not eating onions on your hamburger when you're on a date.
7. Rashness is admitting you talk too much about too little.
8. Honor is an unpadded income tax return.
9. Courage is lighting a gas oven.
10. Honor is a judge's robe.
11. Sacrifice is muddy boots by a cot in the Army barracks of Viet Nam.
12. Courage is a lion trainer.
13. Sacred is the Bible.
14. Honor is the spectators at a baseball game standing up when the national anthem is played.
15. Glorious is daddy's smile when baby takes his first steps toward the waiting, extended hands.

EXERCISE. Write existential sentences for the following: confusion, authority, fear, casualness, competence, selfishness, indifference, disrespect, duty, excitement, suffering, fastidiousness, foolishness, freedom, courage, gratitude, guilt, guile, hope, humility, humor, ignorance, implusiveness, reliability, resentment.

13. The Escape from Alien Masks: Some Texts

a. There are many people who reach their conclusions about life like schoolboys; they cheat their master by copying the answer out of a book without having worked out the sum for themselves.

--S. Kierkegaard, Journals

b. No one knows what the times are like any longer; the writer must draw the secret out of "the haunted air." The writer now discovers his reality and he makes his own bargain with reality; there is no objective solid presence out there that he can fully trust or believe in. But his solitariness is accompanied by a constant sense of discovery. Every idea, every fresh inroad into the true nature of things is one that the writer has brought back out of the ash heap of destroyed faiths around him.

--Alfred Kazin, On Native Grounds

c. It is not hopelessness one sees today, it is a manifest feeling of strangeness before a kind of life that has actually outrun all the names that we can give to it. The writer who is always reaching out into this strangeness to say what things are really like - this man cannot feel the kind of old-fashioned force, the tonic resistance, that writers felt when the world had a more secure character for them, when it was still solidly there, for them to change. In our age the good writers give the effect of being explorers into cosmic space; and the individuality they want, and need, is not that of the "non-conformist." Society itself is fundamentally too disorganized in its values to exact conformity; what it wants is obedience, in order to convince itself that it exists at all.

--Kazin, ibid.

d. The key word in our time is not rebellion but knowledge. Man's very nature is a predicament to him; and society is not a collection of philistines who have rigid values which he opposes but a collection of people whose own traditions are dead, and who are looking for convictions. This is why the critical imagination plays so large a role in modern-day culture, for ideas bring life; and why the best writers of our time - whether it be Malraux in the Voices of Silence, or Edmund Wilson searching into the deep, deep well of the past - have the effect not of opposing a status quo but of creating the new reality of mind where, in all our unexpectedness, we can live.

--Kazin, ibid.

14. Exfoliation of "As Ifs": Edmond Rostand, Cyrano de Bergerac (excerpt)

Observe. I myself will proceed
To put him in his place.
(He walks up to CYRANO, who has been watching him, and stands there, looking him over with an affected air.)
Ah . . . your nose . . . hem! . . .
Your nose is .... rather large!
CYRANO (gravely). Rather.
VALVERT (simpering). Oh well--
CYRANO (coolly). Is that all?
VALVERT (turns away, with a shrug). Well, of course--
CYRANO. Ah no, young sir!
You are too simple. Why, you might have said--

Oh, a great many things! Mon dieu, why waste
Your opportunity? For example, thus:--
AGGRESSIVE: I, sir, if that nose were mine,
I'd have it amputated--on the spot!
FRIENDLY: How do you drink with such a nose?
You ought to have a cup made specially.
DESCRIPTIVE: 'Tis a rock--a crag--a cape--
A cape? say rather, a peninsula!
INQUISITIVE: What is that receptacle--
A razor-case or a portfolio?
KINDLY: Ah, do you love the little birds
So much that when they come and sing to you,
You give them this to perch on? INSOLENT:
Sir, when you smoke, the neighbors must suppose
Your chimney is on fire. CAUTIOUS: Take care--
A weight like that might make you topheavy.
THOUGHTFUL: Somebody fetch my parasol--
Those delicate colors fade so in the sun!
PEDANTIC: Does not Aristophanes
Mention a mythologic monster called
Hippocampelephantocamelos?
Surely we have here the original!
FAMILIAR: Well, old torchlight! Hang your hat
Over that chandelier--it hurts my eyes.
ELOQUENT: When it blows, the typhoon howls.
And the clouds darken. DRAMATIC: When it bleeds--
The Red Sea! ENTERPRISING: What a sign
For some perfumer! LYRIC: Hark--the horn
Of Roland calls to summon Charlemagne!--
SIMPLE: When do they unveil the monument?
RESPECTFUL: Sir, I recognize in you
A man of parts, a man of prominence--
RUSTIC: Hey? What? Call that a nose? Na, na--
I be no fool like what you think I be--
That there's a blue cucumber! MILITARY:
Point against cavalry! PRACTICAL: Why not
A lottery with this for the grand prize?
Or--parodying Faustus in the play--
"Was this the nose that launched a thousand ships
And burned the topless towers of Ilium?"
These, my dear sir, are things you might have said
Had you some tinge of letters, or of wit
To color your discourse. But wit,--not so,
You never had an atom--and of letters,
You need but three to write you down--an Ass.
Moreover,--if you had the invention, here
Before these folk to make a jest of me--
Be sure you would not then articulate
The twentieth part of half a syllable
Of the beginning! For I say these things
Lightly enough myself, about myself,
But I allow none else to utter them.

15. New Ways of Looking

Imagination may be understood as the unusual linking of things not linked before, as the seeing of old things through new angles of vision. Imagination exists on all levels from the most superficial to the most profound. The ability to think imaginatively is the essence of artistic creativity. It is probably a matter of inborn temperament ultimately; but if it does exist latently, it can be developed and such an exercise as the following might be one way to get started thinking imaginatively.

Following are two lists of activities common to us all. Choose an activity from the right hand list to explain by describing it in terms of an activity in the left hand column (or vice versa). Push the application as far and as hard as it will go; don't be afraid of being "unusual." Stretch your wits. Try to condense your comparisons in a phrase or a word, rather than in extended actions or clauses.

Activities A

Playing cards
Changing a tire
Selling
Walking
Carpentry
Sailing
Skiing
Making match-stick houses
Cutting out paper dolls
Day dreaming
Sewing
Plowing
Dragging
Launching rockets
Running for office
Hunting
Broiling
Playing baseball
Playing marbles
Russian roulette
Hooking a rug
Fencing
Knitting
Swimming
Brushing teeth

Activities B

Writing essays
Making love
Growing up
Growing old
Rising in the world
Studying
Meditating
Preaching
Swindling
Teaching
Learning
Dreaming
Reforming
Reasoning
Wooing
Chaperoning
Failing
Eating
Quarreling
Making peace
Negotiating
Brawling
Revolting
Flying
Inventing
Lending

* *

Note in the following clichés the (at one time) unusual linking of things not linked before: "grease the palm," bribing with cooking; "hem in," military science with sewing; "bolt," rebellion with horsemanship; "feather one's nest," ambition with bird-watching; "flash in the pan," fickleness with cooking; "horns of a dilemma," crisis with barnyard; "bark up the wrong tree," mistake with hunting; "hang fire," indecision with gunnery.

16. The Existential Sentence and Point of View

Existential sentences may be written from a specific point of view. For the sake of convenience, these points of view may be classified as follows: time, place, and person (role and attitude). Notice how the specific illustration of the abstraction is determined not merely by the abstraction itself but also by the point of view from which you choose to view it.

Thus from the point of view of a specific time:

Dawn: Guilt is preferring the soft, warm pillow of your bed to the hard, cold lab stool of your eight o'clock.

Evening: Guilt is remembering over supper's last cup of coffee that you had an appointment at three with your advisor to discuss your bad memory.

Dawn: Ignorance is preferring the hard, cold lab stool to the soft, warm pillow.

Christmas: Ignorance is to believe that you'll always want to play with your stuffed teddy bear.

From the point of view of a specific place:

Bus: Excitement is to ride to the end of the line with a blonde you've just met.

Car: Excitement is the first fifty miles in your first new car.

Kitchen: Suffering is the widow of a week making meals for one less.

Office: Suffering is the boss of a secretary who always forgets how to spell "Sincerely yours."

From the point of view of a specific person in terms of attitude:

Eloquent: Humility is to regret that you have but one life to give for your country.

Folksy: Humility is Will Rogers saying, "All I know is what I read in the newspapers."

Friendly: Confusion is the Methodist minister inviting a Catholic priest to dinner at O'Flaherty's Steak House on a Friday night.

Eloquent: Confusion is to take arms against a sea of troubles.
is to smell a rat but to promise to nip it in the bud.

From the point of view of a specific person in terms of role:

Father: Humility is thanking God that all the children take after their mother.

Athlete: Humility is the All-American halfback praising his left tackle after the 80-yard touchdown run.

Teacher: Confusion is an English teacher misspelling "receive" on the blackboard.

Mailman: Confusion is ten families named Smedley on the same block.

Write existential sentences from the following points of view:

Time: midnight, noon, dawn, early morning, evening, suppertime, one of the holidays (Christmas, Thanksgiving, etc.), one of the seasons.

Place: city, country, kitchen, bathroom, living room, dormitory room, classroom, office, cars, locker room, army barracks, bus, subway, woods, campus walk.

Person:

a) Attitude: Aggressive, friendly, descriptive, inquisitive, kindly, insolent, cautious, thoughtful, pedantic, folksy, eloquent, lyric, simple, respectful, rustic, military, practical.

b) Role: mother, father, uncle, clergyman, merchant, mailman, librarian, coach, teacher, athlete, sorority girl, fraternity man.

17. Toward the Point of Urgency: The Taste of Self

a. ...our only hope as artists is to continually ask ourselves, "Am I writing what I really think? Not what is acceptable; not what my favorite intellectual would think in this situation; not what I wish I felt. Only what I cannot help thinking." For I believe that the only reality which a man can ever surely know is that self he cannot help being, though he will only know that self through its interactions with the world around it. If he pretties it up, if he changes its meaning, if he gives it the voice of any borrowed authority, if in short he rejects this reality, his mind will be less than alive. So will his words.

--W. D. Snodgrass

b. ...it is the rehearsal
Of own, of abrùpt sèlf there so thrusts on, so throngs the ear

--Gerard Manley Hopkins, "Henry Purcell"

c. And this[[the "selfbeing" of things] is much more true when we consider the mind; when I consider my selfbeing, my consciousness and feeling of myself, that taste of myself, of I and me above and in all things, which is more distinctive than the taste of ale or alum, more distinctive than the smell of walnutleaf or camphor...."

--G. M. Hopkins, Notebooks

d. What I really lack is to be clear in my mind what I am to do, not what I am to know, except in so far as a certain understanding must precede every action. The thing is to understand myself...; the thing is to find a truth which is true for me, to find the idea for which I can live and die.

--S. Kierkegaard, Journals

e. What is truth but to live for an idea? Ultimately everything must rest upon a postulate; but the moment it is no longer outside him, and he lives in it, then and only then does it cease to be a postulate for him.

--S. Kierkegaard, Journals

18. The Archetype of the Plant

--Meyer Abrams, The Mirror and the Lamp, pp. 171-175

a. The plant originates in a seed. The whole is prior and primary, the parts secondary and derived.

b. The plant grows. 'All is growth, evolution, genesis--each line, each word almost, begets the following...' In discussing a finished work, one must look toward the mental process which evolved it; criticism is, to some extent, psychological.

c. The growing plant assimilates to its own substance alien and diverse elements. Images of sense become merely materials on which the mind feeds--materials which quite lose their identity in being assimilated to a new whole.

d. The plant evolves spontaneously from an internal source of energy. Unity is produced *ab intra*. The work has an inherent teleology.

e. The achieved structure of a plant is an organic unity. While the whole owes its being to the co-existence of the parts, the existence of that whole is a necessary condition to the survival of the parts. Each part is both ends and means.

19. "Of Studies," Francis Bacon

Studies serve for delight, for ornament, and for ability. Their chief use for delight is in privateness and retiring; for ornament, is in discourse; and for ability, is in the judgment and disposition of business; for expert men can execute, and perhaps judge of particulars, one by one; but the general counsels, and the plots and marshaling of affairs come best from those that are learned. To spend too much time in studies is sloth; to use them too much for ornament is affectation; to make judgment wholly by their rules is the humor of a scholar. They perfect nature, and are perfected by experience; for natural abilities are like natural plants, that need pruning by study; and studies themselves do give forth directions too much at large, except they be bounded in by experience. Crafty men contemn studies, simple men admire them, and wise men use them; for they teach not their own use; but that is a wisdom without them and above them, won by observation. Read not to contradict and confute, nor to believe and take for granted, nor to find talk and discourse, but to weigh and consider. Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested; that is, some books are to be read only in parts; others to be read but not curiously, and some few to be read wholly, and with diligence and attention. Some books also may be read by deputy, and extracts made of them by others; but that would be only in the less important arguments and the meaner sort of books; else distilled books are, like common distilled waters, flashy things. Reading maketh a full man; conference a ready man; and writing an exact man. And, therefore, if a man write little, he had need have a great memory; if he confer little, he had need have a present wit; and if he read little, he had need have much cunning, to seem to know that he doth not. Histories make men wise; poets, witty; the mathematics, subtle; natural philosophy, deep; moral, grave; logic and rhetoric, able to contend. Abeunt studia in mores.[1] Nay, there is no stand or impediment in the wit but may be wrought out by fit studies; like as diseases of the body may have appropriate exercises. Bowling is good for stone and reins,[2] shooting for the lungs and breast, gentle walking for the stomach, riding for the head, and the like. So if a man's wit be wandering, let him study the mathematics; for in demonstrations, if his wit be called away never so little, he must begin again. If his wit be not apt to distinguish or find differences, let him study the schoolmen; for they are cymini sectores![3] If he be not apt to beat over matters, and to call up one thing to prove and illustrate another, let him study the lawyers' cases. So every defect of the mind may have a special receipt.

20. The Personal Meditation: John Donne: "Devotion XVII"

Nunc lento sonitu dicunt, morieris

Now, this Bell tolling softly for another
says to me, Thou must die

Perchance he for whom this bell tolls may be so ill as that he knows not it tolls for him; and perchance I may think myself so much better than I am as that they who are about me and see my state may have caused it to toll for me, and I know not that. The church is catholic, universal, so are all her actions; all that she does belongs to all. When she baptizes a child, that action concerns me; for that child is thereby connected to that body which is my head too and ingrafted into that body whereof I am a member. And when she buries a man, that action concerns me. All mankind is of one author, and is one volume; when one man dies, one chapter is not torn out of the book, but translated into a better language; and every chapter must be so translated. God employs several translators; some pieces are translated by age, some by sickness, some by war, some by justice; but God's hand is in every translation, and his hand shall bind up all our scattered leaves again for that library where every book shall lie open to one another. As therefore the bell that rings to a sermon calls not upon the preacher only but upon the congregation to come, so this bell calls us all; but how much more me who am brought so near the door by this sickness! There was a contention as far as a suit--in which piety and dignity, religion and estimation, were mingled--which of the religious orders should ring to prayers first in the morning; and it was determined that they should ring first that rose earliest. If we understand aright the dignity of this bell that tolls for our evening prayer, we would be glad to make it ours by rising early, in that application, that it might be ours as well as his, whose indeed it is. The bell doth toll for him that thinks it doth; and though it intermit again, yet from that minute that that occasion wrought upon him he is united to God. Who casts not up his eye to the sun when it rises? but who takes off his eye from a comet when that breaks out? Who bends not his ear to any bell which upon any occasion rings? but who can remove it from that bell which is passing a piece of himself out of this world? No man is an island entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main. If a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less, as well as if a promontory were, as well as if a manor of thy friends or of thine own were. Any man's death diminshes me, because I am involved in mankind, and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee. Neither can we call this a begging of misery or a borrowing of misery, as though we were not miserable enough of ourselves but must fetch in more from the next house, in taking upon us the misery of our neighbors. Truly it were an excusable covetousness if we did, for affliction is a treasure, and scarce any man hath enough of it. No man hath affliction enough that is not matured and ripened by it and made fit for God by that affliction. If a man carry treasure in bullion or in a wedge of gold and have none coined into current money, his treasure will not defray him as he travels. Tribulation is treasure in the nature of it, but it is not current money in the use of it, except we get nearer and nearer our home, heaven, by it. Another man may be sick too, and sick to death, and this affliction may lie in his bowels as gold in a mine and be of no use to him; but this bell that tells me of this affliction digs out and applies that gold to me, if by this consideration of another's danger I take mine own into contemplation and so secure myself by making my recourse to my God, who is our only security.

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[1] Studies develop into habits. (Ovid)

[2] Kidneys.

[3] Hair-splitters.

21. A Student's Meditation on Loneliness

Last week I was one of six girls who stayed in Wilson Hall over the Thanksgiving Holidays. We were scattered throughout a dorm designed to house 600 girls; and since none of us knew the others very well, there was little contact among us. At first, I had welcomed the opportunity to catch up on my studies, sleep, and recreational reading. Soon, however, my interests focused on my reactions to being totally alone and responsible to no one; in short, this weekend was a foretaste of my future life.

For a long time my plans for the future had been based on a sober, self-conscious attempt to learn what there is to be known; more than likely, my life would be predominately solitary, since that would provide less distractions from my goal. Consequently, for this weekend, I had planned to study intensively. But my scholarly solitude soon proved more than I had bargained for.

Sometime during this vacation I stopped reading and paused to look around. I looked for the burning flame of knowledge and wisdom, but what did I see instead? I saw myself, huddled in some book-walled refuge, with all the lights on and the doors locked. I saw my mind, locked against all but the contents of that room, and beginning to doubt the reality of anything outside the room. I saw all the lights on - the blinds were always pulled. But what had been closed against the malicious intruders of the night had not been reopened to admit the warmth and illumination of the sun; and for anyone in the room to see at all, there was only the artificial light, turned on and off at will. Thus it was possible to see, but that which was seen did not glow with the luster that only sunlight can impart.

Primarily I studied chemistry and calculus, two strict disciplines, indispensible to man in his present position in the universe. But the more I studied them and the more proficiently I manipulated their principles, the more I wondered how these principles and these adept manipulations could bear any relevance at all to my life in that room. That they would be of good use to a chemist or a mathematician, I did not question--but for me in that room?

Since meals were not being served for the weekend, I had stocked my "pantry" with crackers, fruit, and soup. These were not intended to provide a feast for the tongue and stomach, but merely to support existence at a level slightly above the minimum. However, even this was not possible. In the first place, I found it impossible to cook the soup, since my roommate had locked up the hot plate and sauce pan. And then the other supplies ran out. I was forced to eat in the grill, where I could fill up on sandwiches.

And there I also filled up on the noise, the music, the laughter of my neighbors. I saw, in some strange way, how nourishment depends upon the presence of others. My intention of enduring a brave and studious solitude had failed to carry me through.

I saw all these things. I saw my room shrink the longer I stayed in it. I saw my body starving for sustenance. I saw myself locked in that room except for a few brief excursions through the echoing halls. And I saw that my life really could turn into such an empty existence, not for just a few days, but for its entirety.

This must not be. I do not doubt my goal, knowledge, but I realize that it must be sought in another way. I have become more and more aware that, though I may not find what I seek by constant trips to the grill, I will get a surer grasp of what knowledge is and how to find it by inquiring of my fellows; for they too have searched--and have found many things. I, in my turn, can tell them what I have found in my room--but there is no longer any profit in searching through it again.

It is time to move out.

22. Text on the Principle of As-If

> "I am trying to suggest to you what are the characteristics of creative imagination--creative mind, reason, intellect, or whatever you like to call it. . . . : the perception of likenesses, the relating of like things to form a new unity, and the words 'as if'."
>
> --Dorothy Sayers, "Creative Mind"

23. Analogical Quotations

We used portions of the following:

Albert Upton and Richard W. Samson, Creative Analysis (New York, 1963), pp. 164-168.

24. The Hedonic Response

We used portions of the following:

William J. J. Gordon, Synectics: The Development of Creative Capacity (New York, 1961), pp. 134-138.

25. Strategy and Tactics in Writing

Military men divide the art of war into strategy and tactics. Generals take care of the former; sergeants the latter. Strategy involves the whole field of operations; tactics the specific field of the foxhole and the soldier. Strategy disposes of armies; tactics of squads. Strategy wins wars; tactics win battles.

The art of writing is analogous. Strategy here involves the large-scale planning and directing to insure that the idea gets stated, developed, compared and contrasted with skill; the intelligence to adjust the means to the ends of the composition desired and the audience imagined; the maneuvering of large bodies of proof and demonstration to support the offensive drive of the major idea; the mopping up of all possible objections to the idea in summation; and, finally, the setting of peace terms in conclusion. Strategy in writing means, in other words, defining a subject and assembling materials in relation to it. Defining a subject is not simply saying, "I think I'll write about American politics," or "I think I'll write about nature," anymore than a general can simply yell "Charge!" The strategy of wars (Hannibal crossing the Alps, Eisenhower crossing the Channel), and the strategy of composition ("Roosevelt Packs the Supreme Court," Walden), need specific ends. From the vague and generalized aspiration, the good general and the good writer move to the precisely defined and limited objective. Failing in the specialization, neither can assemble forces to get the war won, the composition written: Hannibal needed elephants, Eisenhower landing craft. In addition, the general or the writer, to be strategically effective, must single-mindedly fix his attention upon the object of his campaign. Neither Hannibal nor Eisenhower could have triumphed without singleness of purpose. The subject, when finally defined, is really the subject as seen by a writer's particular way of regarding it; the war, when finally understood, is really the enemy as held by the general's particular way of engaging him.

Strategy concerns planning, tactics concern procedure within the broad decisions laid down by the general staff. Tactics in writing include such things as what to begin with, what to end with, what level of usage to employ, what sorts of proof to marshal, what kind of wit to employ, and, of course, what degree of "correctness" to insist on. Tactics in military maneuver are full of short charges and withdrawals, digging in, enveloping a position by flank attack, hurrying up and waiting, boldness and caution, planning and guessing. The tactics of writing also involve drafting and redrafting, writing and erasing, checking and rechecking, hurrying through an inspired insight, and waiting for the cool detachment of criticism, witty maneuvers of metaphor, bold envelopment of analogies, and a good deal of plain marching of sentences in good order.

We contend that good writing is good strategy first and foremost. The wholeness of the whole composition we must first secure or all is lost; poor strategy loses wars, poor tactics only battles. Too often we are concerned only with the tactics of "correct" grammar, too seldom for the strategy of good design in writing. While we fuss with formalities, we lose the war. Sentences in Class A uniforms, Fowlered, Perrined, and Webstered, gallop off to annihilation like Tennyson's Six Hundred. The art of war is strategy first, tactics second. The art of writing cannot improve on this wisdom.

26. "Overheating the Economy"

An editorial appearing in The New York Times, January 21, 1964.

APPENDIX B

Here follow the subjective evaluations of four readers, all professors of English and teachers of composition at Michigan State University. Each responded to a list of suggested questions which we supplied (reproduced below as the first item in this appendix). We did not require that each teacher answer the questions directly: two did, two did not. We supplied each teacher with a random selection of essays, fifty from the control groups, fifty from the experimental groups. We did not mask the identity of either group in this case.

Instructions for Readers

Your group of essays includes both those written in "experimental" sections, and those written in "control" sections. We have had all the essays in both groups read and evaluated on an "absolute" numerical scale by other groups of readers. What we now desire to have is a more subjective impression of these essays where it will be possible for you to speculate on what you believe is "going on" in the experimental essays. The strict objective or numerical approach prohibits such speculation. We believe, however, that since our project was an attempt to start things more than complete them, that the necessarily final judgments of the "objective" sort may not do us complete justice. Can you spot trends and implications in these essays that you think are valuable and ought to be exploited? Or, on the other hand, are there things happening here that you do not sympathize with? We are asking you for impressions, generally of two kinds: (1) a comparison of experimental with control essays, and (2) a consideration of the experimental essays in themselves, especially with regard to their implications for the improvement of the teaching of writing.

I. Comparative Questions

1. Which set of essays seems to have more originality, and in what ways? (By "originality" we understand Erich Fromm's sense of the term: not novelty but the impression that the writer is standing at the center of his own thoughts (or feelings) even though those thoughts may resemble the thoughts of others; his thoughts and feelings "originate" in him; someone else's thoughts are not "thinking" in him.)

2. Generally, in which set of essays does it seem more important for writers to express themselves and not be misunderstood? In what specific ways is this sense evident? (Certain turns of phrase, certain approaches, etc.)

3. Which set of essays gives the greater sense of form, actual or potential? By "form" we mean something better described in organic metaphors: a sense of the "growth" of a "seed idea" or single theme, "exfoliation" of an argument or proof, "fruition" in the totality of the essay. The whole seems a "growing" whole, not necessarily a static or finished whole. The parts serve the whole as an arm the body, the leaf the plant.

II. Questions on Experimental Essays Themselves

1. Do the techniques employed in the experimental essays--the meditation in the "Loneliness" essays, and the analogy in the "Coming of Age" essays--seem to provide a more coherent means for the instructor to gauge the success or failure of an essay?

2. Do these techniques seem to provide the student-writer with a more meaningful and useful way of provoking a collection of scattered insights into an essay, of "mobilizing a vocabulary " and a unified perspective?

3. Which of the two techniques (meditation and analogy) seems to be more promising, both from the teacher's point of view and the student's? In what ways, specifically?

4. Does the technique of the meditation in the "Loneliness" essays seem to accomplish what it was designed to do: that is, engage the student as a person? Do you think this technique could be extended so as to engage students as persons in more abstract, less obviously personal subjects? In what ways?

5. Does the technique of the analogy in the "Coming of Age" essays seem to accomplish what it was designed to do: that is, provide the student with a way of visualizing a possible structure within an idea that will also organize the essay on the idea; a way of provoking a more concrete, less impersonal, vocabulary; a way of imposing a pattern on events without employing the abstract categories of logic?

A. Dr. Clinton S. Burhans, Assistant Professor English

I. Comparative Questions

1. Clearly, the experimental essays have more originality, as defined in this question. The control essays fall into two main categories: a) definition, either by logical categories or by examples; b) personal experience, centering on a few key events or experiences which symbolize loneliness or maturation for the writer. In the first group, the essays are abstract and impersonal and usually dull and trite; in the second, they are personal but usually dull in substance and trite in form and development. Both groups are notably lacking in any sort of imaginative freshness or sparkle. The experimental essays nearly all project the feeling of a personality at the center of an idea and shaping it; moreover, the metaphorical tension of the analogical process often produces an imaginative quickening, a vitality of conception through perception which stirs a reader's interest and forces him into identification with the writer.

2. I don't fully understand this question. The problem of expressing ideas without being misunderstood seems the same in both sets of essays. It is true, however, that the writers of the experimental essays seem more directly concerned with this problem and more successful in solving it.

3. Clearly again, the experimental essays evoke much the greater sense of form, both actual and potential. The control essays, where they do reflect a real effort at form, suggest the imposition of form on the substance of the essays. That is, the writer decides to define or to exemplify loneliness or coming of age and then fills his cup with the abstractions or examples he needs. In the experimental essays, the form is the idea, and much of the interest in the essay lies in the reader's sense that he is not just understanding what the writer means, but that he is sharing with him the development of the idea as he experiences it in the apparently free meditative unfolding or in the imaginatively stimulating search for the exact metaphorical equivalences to express his unique version of a common experience. In short, the control essays, when they are interesting, depend almost entirely on their content; the experimental essays are interesting both in substance and in the shape it takes.

II. Questions on Experimental Essays Themselves

1. The question seems too broad. These techniques, as the question indicates, are "starters" rather than "completers." They do provide methods by which the student can find out what he really knows and feels about an idea or experience and also give him the means to express it vividly and interestingly. I use similar techniques--though not the meditation--in my own classes and find them invaluable as ways of getting the student writer into a subject on his own terms and out of it in terms to interest a reader. But, though these techniques are useful as "starters" and also, in long essays, as ways to develop sections or points, they can become labored and artificial when not apt or when spun out too long, especially when stretched into an entire essay. This is seldom true of these experimental essays, I admit, but few of them are more than a page or so, and I wonder how the meditation would work if used to develop a fairly long and detailed treatment of loneliness--and I have the same question for a substantial treatment of coming of age by analogy. I make these points not as objections, but as suggestions for further investigation; obviously, these essays weren't designed to test these problems. And finally, while these techniques certainly contribute to an essay's success or failure, other things are also important. A shallow meditation or a superficial analogy is little improvement over even an ordinary definition or exemplification. On the other hand, I must admit that the most successful of the control essays were those in which the writer used analogies. I guess what I'm trying to say is that these techniques are too useful and demonstrably fruitful to be turned into utopian gimmicks or exclusive criteria.

2. Yes, without question--both these techniques are invaluable for leading the student writer to insights that are his own and then giving him the means to express these insights from a single and unified perspective. Indeed, here is where the experimental essays are most outstandingly superior to the control essays. One can feel the writer moving at relative ease and in relative control within his material. Both the meditation and the analogy seem to give the writer a direction to go in thinking about an idea and a vehicle to get there in one piece.

3. Both techniques seem equally promising as "starters," as ways of getting the student into his subject. The meditation seems more promising for developing personally-oriented longer essays, and the analogy for shorter essays, for parts of essays, and for less personal writing.

4. The meditation certainly does accomplish its purpose; the writer is clearly there at the center of his writing. Moreover, it produces an interest dramatically in contrast to the dull and impersonal control essays. How the meditation would work for less personal and more abstract subjects, I don't know; but I think the question is less one of the personality or abstraction of the subject than of the purpose of writing about it. No matter how abstract or impersonal the subject, a writer can find a relationship to it, and if this relationship--rather than simple information or argument--is wanted, then I should think that the meditation would continue to be useful--though I still wonder about its usefulness for extended writing.

5. Again, yes, definitely--the analogy certainly succeeds in these essays in doing what it was meant to do: help the student find the substance and shape uniquely his own in treating an idea or experience. And it obviously is successful in making his writing more personal and concrete.

In conclusion, let me say that the difference between the experimental and the control essays is, in general, sharp and dramatic. The experimental essays clearly offer ways to lead students towards "good" writing; the control essays offer little more than the same old dull stuff students have been turning out for generations unchanged. They suggest that automation may have begun in freshman English classes! The techniques in the experimental essays are exciting for the students and rewarding for the teacher; I would like to see them--and others as well--more broadly and thoroughly studied. No single answer is ever likely to solve the problem of teaching writing; but these techniques certainly offer some answers to some of the problems in teaching it.

B. Dr. Herman Struck, Assistant Professor of English

I. Comparative Questions

1. As a group, the experimental papers seem far more original, as originality is defined in the instruction sheet; the major sources for

originality seem to be personal conviction and warmth. In contrast, the control papers have a distinct "armchair theorizing" quality, a lack of warmth and conviction.

2. I'm not quite sure I understand the question "Generally, in which set of essays does it seem more important for writers to express themselves and not be misunderstood?" The experimental writers suggest a greater sense of urgency, probably because of their greater involvement with the subject. They also express their own ideas, or moods, more successfully. In contrast, the control writers give the impression that they are relying on borrowed ideas and sometimes even on borrowed emotions.

   The success of the experimental writers stems, so far as I can judge, primarily from their greater involvement, the superior structure of their presentation, and their willingness to use metaphors, such as "dark night, like a cloak of doubt", "dog faced soldier in the army of life", "seas of time", and "the ray of puberty dispelled the mist of childhood dreams."

3. The experimental group has a distinct superiority in form. This was one of the first features that struck me. It seems to engender not only a more orderly and complete presentation but also a more persuasive essay. At the same time, and somewhat paradoxically, the superiority in form is accompanied by the "growing" feature referred to in the instruction sheet: many of the experimental papers continue "beyond" the final line, like good fiction (War and Peace, Crime and Punishment). The control papers almost never leave this impression; they are "finished" and static.

II. Questions on Experimental Essays Themselves

1. No doubt the techniques used, particularly the analogy, could provide an instructor with a more coherent means of gauging the success or failure of an essay than the usual relatively general assignment. But I think the student should be allowed to write some papers on any subject and in any form he chooses. Theoretically at least, forcing a writer to use a specific framework (any framework) may hamper his expression; it may also suggest a better framework. Actually, however, the contrasts between the two sets of papers strongly suggest that the analogy benefits a writer much more than it hampers him.

2. The meditation and analogy certainly seem to provide the student-writer with a useful method for unifying, organizing, and phrasing. The analogy would naturally aid organization, I think, but the meditation apparently does also. The experimental papers on loneliness, for instance, show a more consistent command of their material and thesis than the control writers (true also of the "Coming of Age" papers). The control writers "scattergun" more often, and fail to stay closely or clearly on the topic. There is also less repetition in the experimental papers, less "forcing" of ideas.

The form usually characterizing the experimental papers also seems to help the writers choose more colorful and effective words, especially verbs; a few examples of this are surge, engulfed, and drift; tested, reshaped, and improved. Both examples come in a sequence.

The experimental meditation papers on loneliness also contain a surprising number of effective metaphors: old and useless things are "like a medieval suit of armor"; another uses metaphors of a pull cord and elevator and the phrase "The fear comes from the hollowness that echoes nothing." In a night scene, a bulldozer "slithered along the ground like something in a prehistoric movie." Though not always worked out smoothly, these metaphors are consistently natural and effective, and intrinsic to the mood or idea.

3. I think that both the meditation and analogy techniques are useful to the student and teacher. The meditation seems to give the student an excellent opportunity for honest introspection which the teacher can encourage him to apply to any subject; and the analogy provides not only a specific framework but a mentally stimulating one. After reading these papers, I suspect that the analogy can help a student organize most kinds of subject matter, and that the meditation will encourage him to reflect upon his material more intensively than he would otherwise. The last feature should help weak students in particular. I think the analogy and the meditation, used in that order, complement each other.

4. The "Loneliness" essays demonstrate clearly that the meditation engages a student; as mentioned before, there is noticeably more self-involvement, more imaginativeness, more originality in phrasing, and more sincerity of emotion than in the control writers. There are, of course, some exceptions to this among the control group, but even the exceptions tend to prove the point: for example, one control writer has written a paper that is probably as good as any in the experimental group, but he uses an analogy (a classification) that structures his ideas. This of course suggests that a good writer naturally uses the forms that this project is trying to supply under forced feeding.

   I see no reason why the technique of the meditation could not be extended to more abstract and less personal subjects. Actually, I suppose any creative genius, such as Einstein, uses that method, or something resembling it. Obviously, though, if you wanted the student to apply the method to non-personal problems or subjects, they would have to be those in which he has a fund of solid facts.

5. The use of analogy in the "Coming of Age" essays does provide the student, to a remarkable degree, with a technique for structuring an idea, organizing it, and provoking a concrete and viable vocabulary without employing the abstract categories of formal logic. I would guess that the analogy would be considerably superior to formal logic for teaching organization, partly because, if the possibilities of the analogy as a technique are thoroughly explored, the material would probably seek a natural form of expression (natural in terms of the writer's view of it). In other words, the possible modes of organizing and phrasing the material would be vastly multiplied. Here the meditation reinforces the analogy.

C. Dr. Theodore B. Strandness, Professor and Chairman
Department of American Thought and Language

Reading the polemics of someone like Shaw, I've sometimes asked myself if it's really "fair" that a man be able to write so well. The question is more than half serious, for the answer one gives largely determines the bent--if he be a teacher of writing--of his classroom. If the answer be yes, then "good writing" and not simply verbal carpentry becomes the dominant aim.

Teachers of the experimental sections in which some of these papers were written clearly had aims other than the behavioral scientist who, in Lionel Trilling's parody, wrote of Romeo and Juliet: "their libidinal impulses being reciprocal, they activated their individual erotic drives and integrated them within the same frame of reference."

Since well over half of college degree holders now write in this fashion, the apparent and extremely important implication of what I read in the papers of the experimental group is that the truly humane writing classroom is not only different from but at odds with the behavioral scientific one. The point is central and cannot be too much emphasized. Writing is a verbal suit which comes in endless styles, and the teacher's taste, skill with scissors, etc., in a class devoted to writing will help determine the verbal garb in which students choose to appear.

The phrase "help determine" is important, for the association in one such class is, generally speaking, too brief to have a really revolutionary effect on the verbal habits of most students. Nevertheless, when I read these papers some months ago without knowing which came from experimental and which from control sections, I was struck by the amount of analogy and specificity in the papers I thought best, most of which I now assume came from the experimental sections. Only later did I learn that these two obvious but everlastingly difficult characteristics to inculcate were important aims of the project's framers.

Now that I have the papers in two batches (i.e., one the experimental and the other the control) I can see that both contain good as well as poor writing, but the amount of specificity, figurative expression, economy of phrase, sense of self (i.e., someone actually writing, not just a student filling a 300-500 word requirement), organic growth of statement and comparative lack of the Trilling travesty kind of thing in the experimental group is marked.

Before writing this statement I started to note examples and then decided simply to quote typical passages from several papers in each group just as they came off the pile. What follows may have loaded the dice a bit but not much. The following are from the experimental group:

> "It was nearing supper time on a late October day when I arrived home....The family was gathered in the living room, my father reading the Dowagiac Daily News."
>
> "The period called coming of age is a bridge" (well-developed analogy).
>
> Coming of age is like "waking up from a [childhood] dream."

> The writer hears "the voices of his mother, his father, his friends, and the world: come out of your dream, they say."
>
> "I feel as though I am alone in the midst of a vast wasteland of darkness with no place to escape my solitude."
>
> "How sad I grew as I thought of Roger who could not read and Charlotte who could but was given no encouragement to do so.... And the idiot who could sit beside me and look but not see...."
>
> "...I had said my farewell....The track...had been consigned along with the warm smell of analgesic, the cool silkiness of my uniform, and the soft leather of my shoes to that forlorn someplace called a memory."
>
> "I must find people I like to talk with, people I want to share beauty and sorrow with, people I want to share my life with. I'll never meet them driving down a snow-covered road feeling sorry for myself."
>
> "...with the coming of age you attained truth, but the trail through manhood has been a steady decline from [the] summit of belief. Perhaps it is time to re-evaluate....You are dissatisfied because you're not really sure what you believe any more. Return to the young adventurer spirit in yourself....Go out into the world as the child does. Ask WHY, WHY, WHY."

The following are from the control group--the papers being taken, I repeat, just as they came:

> "The coming of age can be defined as the achievement or completion of a certain level of attainment, when physical maturation is reached, learning processes are inculcated, new skills or old skills are used or re-used, and values are established and practiced."
>
> "Loneliness is an affliction of many people. Webster's definition of affliction is something that causes 'continued pain to mind or body.' Loneliness certainly causes pain of mind. Everyone suffers loneliness at some time in his life."
>
> "There are many ages, during a life's cycle, to which a person looks forward with anticipation."
>
> "At times a person begins to wonder. Many questions come to mind. What is life? Is there such a thing as happiness? . . .His questioning seems to lead him in circles. He does not realize that this lack of meaning is a part of loneliness."
>
> "Loneliness is not something a person can arbitrarily define. It's a matter of feeling, a feeling of being alone. This feeling is not brought on by environmental factors alone. However, the environmental factors do have an effect on the feelings we have. This factor can either enhance or detract from these feelings."

> 'Loneliness...is different to different people....I believe no definite definition of loneliness can be given, but the dictionary will tell you it is a condition of being lonely, or sadness for want of company, or sadness for want of sympathy. I do not think this completely explains loneliness."
>
> "Loneliness is a state of being which can not be tangibly identified, but it is characteristic of all men at all levels of civilization. In an effort to avoid this feeling of emptiness and separateness from the rest of the world man has developed an infinite variety of ways to spend his leisure."
>
> "No people--not here--this is your cloud. You are engulfed in a wispy vapor by a quiet zephyr. Morning rays penetrate the virgin slopes of the horizon. God is here."
>
> "A lonely person may adjust to loneliness but he will not really be happy, because he has for some reason cut off his association, or at least the majority of his association, with the world. The causes of this separation are numerous...."
>
> "Loneliness is world wide. It is evidenced in the faces of men; it is evidenced in literature. Although it has a common bondage in that every man experiences it, man soon finds that his feeling is an individual experience which others cannot share in the same form or degree which he does. Thus, loneliness is a personal feeling that is intermeshed in man's actions."

Further comment seems superfluous. Anyone who doesn't see the differences already noted would presumably profit little by being told once again that they exist.

As to the comparative effectiveness of the two teaching techniques employed in the experimental sections (meditation and analogy), I really know too little of the specifics involved to venture a judgment. I was, however, much impressed by the successful use of analogy. Good analogies are not easy to come by and are characteristically avoided, by even the best students. They've learned to play it safe and framing analogies is risky.

D. Dr. Clyde E. Henson, Professor of English

I suppose that any attempt to discuss the essay and what may be accomplished in it as a literary form would involve me in convolutions of language from which neither I nor any reader could escape. I don't want to get into such convolutions; rather I want to talk about some kinds of things which I find in the essay and what I think is of importance in attempts to write an essay and the end results of those attempts.

I may as well start off by saying that I find many so-called formal essays close to what I conceive of as the article. I find that many people who write what they think is an essay are more concerned with giving information than anything else. But the essay, as I see it, is not to give information or explanation alone, not merely instructional in such terms as mere exposition, but rather, assumes that much information is already known as such and hence tries to illuminate from the point of view of a mind at work on the information. It tries, I think, to protect the writer's personality beyond the mere facts of information, so that how a thing is said becomes the vital quality of the work. Too, it reveals the mind of the writer as his mind finds thought and thought finds expression and the expression in its turn modifies and shapes the thought. The result is that, although the form is made entirely elastic, the subjective quality is paramount, for the voice of the writer as revelatory of his personality comes through, creating a kind of intimacy and self-revelation which is not found in any other form of literature.

The subject, then, is of little importance, but the substance of what the writer thinks or feels is of vital importance. Yet the subject is revealed as the mind of the writer plays upon it, turning it one way and another. Such play of mind on a subject suggests that the organization of the work will depend entirely upon the mind as it plays on the subject, and the mind may discover that the subject organizes itself by the fact that it is a particular subject. Hence, the subject may organize the work in some works (for such subjects organize the minds which handle them), but in other work the mind organizes the subject. But in all works which may be called essays the mind of the writer is revealed, even if it be the mind of the writer for only a moment in time.

In the light of what I have already said, how, then, should I talk of essays which confront me as "control essays" and "experimental essays"? Maybe I ought to talk of style, which I necessarily must do, or I might talk of diction, rhythm, imagery, movement, and even, because I am a teacher of literature, about sentences and paragraphs. Or, I ought, perhaps, talk about building blocks--as we blithely do without knowing precisely what we mean. But mostly, I think, I want to talk about what happens to me when I read "control essays" and "experimental essays."

The stultified pattern of giving information in the manner of instructions which I found recently in the box which brought a dismantled snow-blower to me, is apparently uppermost in the minds of students who write an essay when they are told to do so. They write, as the "control essays" clearly show, in terms of dictionary definition; they try to write what they conceive of as a thing wanted from them. The results are dismal in voice and color. They come out with the dead level tone of the hum of an assembly line, for there is no personality involved in them. A machine could turn them out if the dictionary were programmed into it.

Such writing is in fact the writing by automation and the results are robot-like results. Every movement, every word, every rhythm is stilled and tuned to the capability of the machine and limited by it. No human quality is visible here: there is only the quality of the spinning broken record with the monotony of sameness. The writers have stripped themselves; they are denuded minds with masks on them which shows neither male nor female, age nor youth, feeling nor sense. The paleness of death pervades them--a kind of death like that of rusted car-bodies in a junk yard waiting to be further corrupted by rust as they wait to be smashed into squares of mere iron to be lifted by a mechanical magnet into a truck to be carried to a smelter to be made into reclaimed iron to be made into objects on an assembly line. There is no life--no living thing in them. For the minds which produced the "control essays" are not there, and no human being is felt or made visible. The essays are the stilted stuffing of straw men leaking from them as they move on a track which is down-grade. They are all dry runs--and dry ruins--with no sense of participation of flesh-and-blood men and women anywhere in them. And I felt caught in a cage of unreality, left sitting somewhere with nothing visible but the desert sands which stretch far away.

But when I read the "control essays" I felt the promise of rain. The desert showed signs of life, and human beings appeared as the words became the active behavior of persons rather than the mechanical motions of robots. For the writers of the "experimental essays" were involved--engaged--had a point of view. They had found themselves the centers of sense and feeling. They extended themselves as people, and they imparted life and the warmth of life to their work.

The "experimental essays" revealed that each writer had had thought, had examined the thought, and had found himself connected with it. He found himself at the center of a universe. He was unique and individual, and he became meaningful to himself and his experinece became meaningful as something he could impart as something that HE knew or felt. He recognized that others might have had similar experiences, such as loneliness, but his loneliness was HIS, and he wanted to share his experience to show what it was to him. And he found himself as a human being with personality, with individual qualities, and his experience shaped his thought and his expression of it shaped the thought, and both revealed anew the experience as he expressed it.

In the essays on "Coming of Age," the writers discovered the surprise of similarities--they discovered analogies which were of their own making and which their own minds found as mirrors of their own experience and their own thought. The writers immediately became human beings in the essays; no longer was there evidence in the essays that the writing was robot-like. By the use of analogies they found ways of sharing their worlds with me, and we found ourselves to be much alike. We experienced together the "shock of recognition." And, as human beings, we became involved in human experience which became meaningful as the stage lights of analogy illuminated it.

The voices of the writers came through, and I felt the excitement of each as each one found that "in me it begins to talk." I felt at once that here was the way one ought to write, for a pattern formed itself. The "I" of each writer stood at the center, viewing the world from a unique point of view which resulted from the recognition of unique quality of each individual human being. Yet the writers were able to touch a reader to show him and to share with him their experience, their feelings, their sensibilities. The writing became the writing of human beings, not that of robots. The cheap imitation of writing of the latter disappeared, and the distinction of the former came through. The plated ware disappeared and in its place stood beautifully chased pure silver.